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ABSTRACT

This report contains a selection of contributed papers and presentations from a conference attended by 270 educators and media workers committed to formulate a vision for media education in South Africa. Pointing out that media education has been variously described in South Africa as visual literacy, mass media studies, teleliteracy, and film studies, or as dealing with educational technology or educational media, the introduction cites a definition of media education as an exploration of contemporary culture alongside more traditional literary texts. It is noted that this definition raises issues for education as a whole, for traditional language study, for media, for communication, and for understanding the world. The 37 selected papers in this collection are presented in seven categories: (1) Why Media Education? (keynote paper by Bob Ferguson); (2) Matters Educational (10 papers on media education and visual literacy); (3) Working Out How Media Works (4 papers on film studies, film technology, and theory); (4) Creating New Possibilities for Media Awareness (9 papers on film and television and 4 on print media); (5) Training and Empowering (2 papers focusing on teachers and 4 focusing on training producers); (6) Media Developing Media Awareness (2 papers); and (7) Afterthoughts (1 paper). Appendices include the Unesco Declaration on Media Eduction (1982), Recommendations from the Toulouse Colloquy on New Directions in Media Education (1990), and Resolutions and Conclusions of the First National Media Education Conference (Durban, 1990). Most of the papers provide their own bibliographies. (DB)

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MEDIA MATTERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

edited by Jeanne Prinsloo and Costas Criticos

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MEDIA MATTERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

edited by Jeanne Prinsloo and Costas Criticos

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Preface

This book is based on the proceedings of the conference *Developing Media Education in the 1990s* held at the University of Natal in 1990. The conference attracted 270 educationists and media workers committed to formulate a vision for Media Education in South Africa.

The conference was not an isolated endeavour but is rather part of an annual series initiated in 1985 by the Media Resource Centre of the Department of Education. The conference series has focused on critical perspectives of educational resources and has included the following:

1985 Educational Media and Development
1986 Design of Learning Spaces
1987 Resource Transfer
1988 Computers in Education
1989 Experiential Learning in Formal & Non-Formal Education.

A number of books, a series of MRC Working Papers and educational videos have been produced as an outcome of the above conferences.

In addition to this book which includes a selection of the *Developing Media Education in the 1990s* papers we have also produced two video tapes as support material. They are records of the key-note papers presented by Bob Ferguson: *What is Media Education For?* and *The Neccessity of Theory in Media Education.*

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Introduction

This publication constitutes one record of the conference 'Developing Media Education in the 1990s' which was held in Durban from 11 to 13 September 1990. It must be stressed that this is *one* record: over the three days, much took place: papers and workshops invited discussion, films and videos were screened, and varied debates occurred. Both the conference and this book are a reflection of the interest, the participation and initiatives of both the contributors in particular, but also of all the delegates. In spite of the calibre of all of the formal contributions, not all have been reproduced here. Forced by limitations of space, we have selected those contributions most relevant to the themes of the publication. In addition, certain papers scheduled to be presented at the conference and which were not for reasons of illness, are included in this publication.

When the idea of the conference was first conceived, it seemed to offer an opportunity for people to come together to think about, extend and discuss the issue of Media Education. It was hoped that the conference and the publication of those proceedings would help to identify the important issues and to act as a catalyst for further interest and initiatives. From the outset it became clear that we needed to clarify many aspects in the field of Media Education. The first problem we encountered was a confusion about the terminology. In South Africa this area of study has found itself described diversely as Visual Literacy, Mass Media Studies, Teleliteracy and Film Studies. Some people interpreted Media Education as dealing with educational technology or educational media (that is media that is employed to support teaching). In advertising the conference, the definition that has been developed by the British Film Institute (BFI) was used in an attempt to define the area that we were addressing.

> Media Education is essentially the exploration of contemporary culture, alongside more traditional literary texts. A media education programme will deal with fundamental questions of language, interpretation and meaning. Such a programme seeks to increase students' critical understanding of the media. Interests include - the way media work, how they produce meanings, how they are organized and how audiences make sense of them.

The first part of this definition alerts us immediately to the realization that when we address Media Education, we are dealing with a complex area. The 'exploration of contemporary culture' does not simply remain subject specific, but raises issues for education as a whole, for traditional language study, for media, for communication, for understanding our world and for citizenry.

The scope of the conference incorporated Media Education in general. This broad focus acknowledged that while language teachers of secondary schools constituted the largest interest group, it needs to incorporate non-formal, adult, primary and tertiary education. Being the first national conference of this nature, we hoped that the contributions and presentations would firstly outline the area (as it has become defined in its present state) as the background to help contextualize this enterprise, and to then instigate an examination and investigation of both theory and methodology. Only by evaluating all these areas can we find a useful path forward.

The initiation of Media Education into South African education has been both gradual and tentative. Its introduction in formal education has been disparate, as it has followed differing patterns according to the particular educational authorities with their regional and racial segregation. Non-formal and project-based educational projects have also experienced sporadic development. Nevertheless, while the inclusion of Media Education on the educational agenda is comparatively recent and uneven, it has taken root; it is now an aspect of the educational agenda, and important work has been undertaken by South African educators. Among the objectives of this conference was the appraisal of these initiatives. In addition, it was hoped that the problems that must accompany any innovation of this nature could be articulated and in this way would lay themselves open to being addressed and indicate fresh ways forward.

One concern that was articulated during the conference concerns the question of how and where Media Education fits into the curriculum. Positioned within the language syllabus for English, language teachers have questioned the introduction and teaching of yet another component into the already weighty language syllabi. The response from some teachers to its introduction appears to have been uneasy, or alternatively hostile. Already overburdened teachers felt confronted with an even greater burden. Their reasons for anxiety are understandable as they sensed that this was indeed an addition to their existing load. It would be counter-productive to dismiss these concerns of teachers at the chalkface who have articulated both their sense of being unqualified to teach this new addition and the problem of how to contain this within their teaching time. This becomes an issue that educational planners should be taking up.

Some teachers were able to accept the challenge and work with the skills and tools that they already had, after all they were already teaching analysis of particular texts. Perhaps they were in fact better equipped than they realized in many senses. Returning to the definition quoted above:

> A media education programme will deal with fundamental questions of language, interpretation and meaning. Such a programme seeks to increase students' critical understanding of the media.

It would apppear that they had indeed been dealing with questions, language and meaning, and critical understandings of texts, albeit only literary ones on the whole. They extended those skills to this new area. This publication records some examples of these approaches.

Another major concern that was articulated during the conference related to the under-representation of non-formal and adult educators and papers. The organizers feel that this under-representation relates to practitioners within formal education as well, within those departments where serious attention has not yet been given to media. Perhaps what the organizers acknowledge is that within a conference of this nature where we are attempting to bring together interests from across the country, we do mirror our social and historical context to a great degree. This context has resulted in great inequalities of resources among different educational authorities, some of which have to contend with problems around basic literacy and numeracy in overcrowded and inadequate situations. Absence of representation partially reflects this unequal structuring where certain groups have literally not had the time or resources to consider Media Education. (This should not imply that Media Education does not have its place in basic literacy as well.) The conference has mirrored a social situation to the extent that those educational formations that have had access to those resources enabled by adequate funding, have been able to develop media consciousness. And beyond that there exist those progressive educational projects, which have frequently spearheaded informal and grassroot developments in Media Education. What did become evident was that while there are fewer examples of these projects, there is a great need and interest in developing Media Education in the non-formal and adult education.

The conference attempted to provide a forum for these concerns as well as to publicize the initiatives of educators to be made public. By doing this, the development and expansion of this pioneering work might be facilitated. Various concerns were expressed informally but more specifically in the final plenary session. The resolutions contain a summary of some of these matters. What is vital for the development of Media Education in South African education is to continue these debates even if they lead us to major transformations of those disciplines which have traditionally been considered discrete and sacrosanct areas.

The organization of this publication

The arrangement of the publication echoes the structure of the conference in a small way by starting with the opening address to the conference and an outline of certain initiatives in different areas of education. .

The opening address, which forms Part One: *Why Media Education?* was delivered by Bob Ferguson in which he addressed the reasons for Media Education. This address forms the first chapter and sets a framework for the chapters that follow. Within this very comprehensive rationale for Media Education, it would be very difficult, perhaps impossible, to isolate any single aspect that is more worthy of attention or possibly more important than any other aspect. However, there are three matters which we identify in particular because they relate specifically to focuses or debates picked up during the conference. Firstly, based on the realization that the presence of mass media is of significance to all of us, and that representations in the media (as well as their absences) are cultural issues, Ferguson stressed that Media Education constitutes an engagement with media representations over an extended period of time. Bearing in mind the dilemmas expressed by teachers about positioning Media Education, planners and educators need to consider the full implications of how we are going to adequately deal with this field of study, of how best it can be contained within the curriculi. Nor can it simply be relegated to the status of a minor literary work by allowing an option between some film and a literary work in some way deemed minor. In this way the first point drawn from Ferguson's introduction indicates the magnitude of the field we have undertaken.

Secondly, central to an understanding of the objectives of this field of study is the issue

> that Media Education and styles of pedagogy or teaching are importantly linked.

Thirdly, Ferguson also deals with the problem of defining Media Education and the terrain of this field of study. He extends the definition borrowed from the B F I, which we quoted earlier, by stressing three components that are perhaps incorporated within that definition but which he deems require clearer emphasis. Ferguson adds power, theory and pleasure. (Of these three, theory forms the focus of the third part entitled *Working Out How Media Works*, while the issues of power and pleasure, interlinked with all other aspects of media education, inform part four, entitled *Creating New Possibilities for Media Awareness*.)

From Ferguson's introductory paper, the structure of this publication picks up on these issues.

Matters Educational deals with the issue of pedagogy. Representatives of some educational authorities outline their approaches and initiatives. In addition, certain authors pick up and develop aspects relating to educational aspects, with varying emphasis on the approach and the pedagogic mode.

Working Out How Media Works incorporates the major theoretical contribution of this publication in the form of Ferguson's second paper, *The Necessity of Theory in Media Education*. There is considerable resistance on the part of some teachers to the slightest hint of things theoretical. Yet unavoidably, an understanding of media calls for a theoretical basis. (No geographer, scientist, historian or mathematician disparages the need for theoretical underpinnings in their field of study.) It is with an understanding of things theoretical that this interlinked and coherent field of study emerges and offers its challenges.

What this theory also achieves is the central realization that media representations are cultural issues. This is picked up by two contributions which by their deconstructive readings of particular film texts emphasise these representations in their cultural contexts.

This is followed by the part entitled *Creating New Possibilities for Media Awareness*. This part is divided into two sections, simply in terms of the media forms they consider. What this set of contributions have in common is that they attempt an interdisciplinary approach to teaching an understanding of the media. They might refer to individual texts, but their intention remains to develop critical tools or approaches for teaching that can be applied to categories of media and can be adapted and inform teaching practice. These authors attempt very specifically to employ theoretical ideas as tools in order to develop critical and analytic skills. They avoid a prescriptive approach to any media text. While few articles are directed at tertiary education, this section concludes with contributions by Marx and Sey, demonstrating sophisticated understandings of filmic theory relevant to rigorous study in higher education.

The section entitled *Training and Empowering* offers articles that deal with empowering teachers who are involved with Media Education as well as potential media producers. They attempt to deal with methodologies that will empower learners. These include valuable critiques and outlines of projects.

The collection of conference papers in the following section, *Media to Develop Media*

Awareness, gives some insight into media producers who react against mainstream media and produce texts that encourage and stimulate critical readings.

We also decided to include a theoretical paper by Urbasch in part seven, *Afterthoughts*, not presented at the conference, but written as a response to it. He confronts the problematic position of educators in their attempts to develop liberating and empowering pedagogic practices. Perhaps such issues can be confronted in future Media Education forums.

Finally, the resolutions and declarations are presented in the appendices.

During the final plenary session many delegates expressed common needs and ideas. They wanted to develop their understandings of this area more in order to teach Media Education. Educational planners should consider implementing in-service training courses and teacher education programmes that advance understandings of Media Education.

However, we need to be careful not to see this new focus and need for understanding as a result of this 'new' field. Rather Media Education has emphasized a need that already exists within education - the need for a new approach to that area that has been defined as language study in secondary school or literacy in primary schools. Language study has already bridged some odd bed partners: learning about job applications and poetic interpretations. At the heart of all this is the fact that language study has traditionally dealt with communication at large although perhaps there has been an emphasis on high cultural analysis. The ability to read and communicate within one's society is acknowledged in early learning. (Its subsequent orientation towards particular types of written texts is simply the consequence of historical accident.) Many of the considerations of language studies are steeped in elitism. John Higgins made this point during the final plenary session of the conference:

> Maybe here and now we ought to think of ways of positively retraining ourselves towards a broader base conception of social and cultural literacy, which addresses not only writing but all the semiotic codes which we use as part of our natural social abilities.

What is needed at this historical juncture is also to concentrate on our modern bards, such as TV or comics. This does not imply that the latest soap-opera is being judged as of greater worth than any other text, perhaps Shakespearean, perhaps South African poetry. It does not imply that media texts from abroad are being deemed more useful than things South African. They are simply part of the vast mass media output and if they find our students amongst their possible audience, then we must consider them relevant.

What Media Education should ideally achieve is the creation of a creative and analytic framework for dealing with information of any form. The scope of Media Education then surely leaves the confines of language subjects in its scope of influence and permeates all understandings of texts. British media educationist, Len Masterman, considers Media Education as not restricted to the domain of media teachers.

> We need to think of it as a specialist field in its own right, certainly, but also as an element that will need to inform the teaching *of all subjects*. Perhaps most importantly of all, media education should be thought of as a *lifelong* process, within which many agencies, institutions and individuals will have important roles to play. (Masterman 1985) ■

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Part I

Why Media Education?

The keynote address delivered by Bob Ferguson forms the first part of this publication and sets a framework for the chapters that follow.

Based on the realization that the presence of mass media is of significance to all of us, and that representations in the media (as well as their absences) are cultural issues, Ferguson stressed that Media Education constitutes an engagement with media representations over an extended period of time. He stresses the mode of pedagogy advocating that the Media Education teacher should facilitate a truly critical analysis and understanding of the media.

Ferguson also extends the definition employed by the conference organizers which we quoted earlier, by stressing three components which he says requires greater emphasis. To this, Ferguson adds power, theory and pleasure.

Media Education is not a remote or esoteric area of study, but one that should encourage active participation. Parallel with an understanding of media and media representations based on an analysis and understanding of media messages, should run a consistent emphasis on the *production* of such messages.

Ferguson raises the issue of resources for Media Education and what might be considered the minimum resources necessary for work to begin. If students are exposed to billboards or radios or other media, regardless how unsophisticated they might be technologically, teaching can or perhaps should begin. With access to any rudimentary form of printing, students can also begin to produce messages as part of their education. The theoretical, analytical and production aspects of Media Education are considered equally important and inextricably linked. Ferguson foresees the development of Media Education as

> just one of the pathways by which education can become truly democratic, open, fearless in its spirit of enquiry, enjoyment and intellectual rigour - and above all of relevance to *all* the people of South Africa.

OPENING ADDRESS: What is Media Education For?

Bob Ferguson

The introduction of Media Education in South Africa is an exciting development. It is also one which raises important issues about the nature and purpose of the discipline and, without sounding too grand about it, about the nature and purpose of education. For one of the points that I will be arguing over the next day is that we cannot separate off Media Education from the rest of what goes on in our educational system - nor from what goes on in our own society. Media Education is about the way the world is represented and mediated - whether in forms which would be described as 'fictional', or in forms which would be described as 'factual'. Both are equally within the remit of Media Education and both require rigorous study. But before we get to this I want to spend a little time sketching out what I consider to be the main possibilities and pitfalls of Media Education, based upon developments in the United Kingdom. In doing so, I will mention something of the history of Media Education and attempt to make a case for certain specific approaches to the field. It will also be necessary to refer to certain educational principles which impact upon Media Education and which have had considerable influence upon approaches to teaching the subject.

Let me start, then, with some pretty basic questions: What is Media Education? What is it for? (And what is it against?) Must Media Education follow a single line of development, or does a plurality of approaches produce more useful and wide-ranging educational results?

In order to understand what Media Education might be, we must first recognise that the presence of the mass media is a significant one for all the citizens of South Africa. That presence can be felt in the cinemas, on television and radio, in the press and in all forms of magazines, journals and comics. It is also a presence which provides certain kinds of representations of the world - whether they be of local, national or international issues. The representations in the media are also concerned with what might in the most general terms be described as cultural issues. This second area covers a multitude of possibilities - from drama and feature films to quiz shows and documentaries. We also need to be concerned, in Media Education, with what is *not* there. An odd suggestion at first, but I will return to it. So let met ask again - what is Media Education?

It is, I suggest, an engagement, over a long period, with all forms of media representations. It is concerned with how messages are put together, by whom and *in whose interests*. It is concerned with the concept of beauty and the concept of the ordinary - with arguments about 'high' and 'low' culture. It is also concerned with how to construct media messages which are similar to those now available, and how to construct messages which are different; and how to acquire production skills - from the use of the pen to the use of the tape recorder and camera. It is a subject which should be on the agenda for all teachers and students and one which does not lend itself to brief encounters. It must be a part of our general educational approach as well as a specific subject. For, above all, Media Education is an endless enquiry into the way we make sense of the world and the way others make sense of the world for us. Above all it must be genuinely and openly critical.

Let me now try to unravel the clutter of points I have made and impose some sort of order on them. First, I want to turn to the main impetus behind much of the early teaching about the mass media in the United Kingdom. I would argue that much of the early work in schools relating to the mass media was elitist in the extreme and based upon fear. The teacher was cast in the role of the defender of traditional values against the onslaught of the mass media. There was little of value to be found in the mass media, except the occasional respectable film which aspired to the higher things usually found in novels of a certain type. And of course there was the quality press - *The Times* and perhaps the *Daily Telegraph*. Teachers were encouraged to help their students to identify quality and to identify that which was cheap and worthless. It was assumed that the teacher would be in sympathy with this approach and indeed that the teacher would be 'in the know'. The poor students were innocents in need of protection. Indeed much of the teaching which was advocated in the 1950s was described as the inoculation approach to the media. Successful teaching meant that teachers stopped their students from catching terrible and usually unnamed diseases from the media. But the greatest of these diseases would be a falling off in standards of taste!

Of course it would be foolish to dismiss all of this as mere fancy. Students do come into the classroom with a great deal of experience of their own - but they also come into the classroom with great gaps in their experience and with a great deal of what all we teachers have but do not like to talk about, that is, ignorance. The teachers' task is to replace that ignorance with knowledge, or better, to provide the *means* whereby that ignorance can be replaced by knowledge. And this *may* include an engagement with debates about taste and standards in the media. But that is clearly not enough. There are other aspects to Media Education which I will come on to. But the approach about which I have been speaking so far has one fundamental flaw - and that is in its mode of pedagogy. This flaw has to be relevant to the development of Media Education in South Africa. It is a mode of pedagogy based upon a transmission model of education. This type of approach believes that if you tell students what is 'right', they will learn it, and hence change. They will become like you, the teacher. If there is a critical dimension to this approach, it is one based upon acceptance of the premises and approaches of the guide or mentor. And the flaw - at least as far as we can tell from our experience - is that the approach does not work! You cannot tell students about the way the world is, or what a 'good' film or newspaper is. The educational truth about the mass media, even if such a thing were to exist, cannot be simply revealed to school students. And if teaching is undertaken which adopts this transmission model, it either fails or the students become parrots of the teachers' words. (Another way of describing failure).

Knock on effect - an analysis, no voice, no capacity for growth and change.

What the Media Education teacher can do is to present students with a range of possibilities and a range of tools for analysis and let them make up their own minds. In this way you are encouraging them to think, to make judgments and to see that their own judgments are valid and useful. There has been an unhealthy tendency in Media Education for teachers of a variety of persuasions to lay down the law (a less polite way of describing the transmission model!) and then to complain or to wonder at their failure. I hope you will not be tempted in South Africa to follow that path. It leads to frustration and to disillusion.

The first point which arises for me from what I have been arguing so far is that Media Education and styles of pedagogy or teaching are importantly linked.

The second point which arises for me is that Media Education should not fall into the trap of *defending* students against the media. It would seek, rather, to *enable* students to understand how the media operates - how individual media construct their messages. In the South African context one would perhaps be distinguishing between those messages constructed with subtlety, and those constructed with a metaphorical sledgehammer. Put another way, one has to be concerned with the ideological implications of media messages, and with outright propaganda. The distinction is important for several reasons. It would be either patronising or plain stupid to teach the majority of students to recognise from the mass media that which they already know from their daily experience. What is perhaps not so patronising and has a validity for all South African citizens, is to study how the media attempts to perpetuate relations of power and subordination, and how they work to make 'natural' relations which are plainly socially and politically motivated. This brings me back to another question I raised at the beginning of this introduction: what is Media Education for?

Of course, part of the purpose of this conference must be to address this issue but I would like to offer one or two ways into considering the question. I will turn first to a recent definition of Media Education which was put forward by the British Film Institute Education Department. This is an oft-quoted definition and it is the result of numerous debates over the last decade in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland:

> Media education is a general term describing any progressive development of a critical understanding which seeks to extend pupils' knowledge of the media and to develop their analytic and creative skills through critical and practical work. Such work should increase their capacity to understand both the contents of the media and the processes involved in their production and reception. Media education includes teaching about the forms, conventions and technologies through which the media are manufactured, their institutional arrangements and contexts, and their social, political and cultural roles. It aims to create more active and critical media users who will demand, and could contribute to a greater range and diversity of media products.

The emphasis here is clearly on the importance of developing the critical, and creative and the analytical - whether as skills or understanding. There is also a stress on media forms, conventions and technologies. These last three are in a sense a code for a multitude of studies and activities. These would include the study of a range of media; the production of media messages - from newspaper articles to video recordings; the study of generic conventions, (whether it be romance, crime or news) in both fiction and non-fiction media; the study of narrative and realism and the study of news and documentary in a variety of media. It would also include the study of the cinema. The generality of the definition is one of its main strengths, because it leaves quite a bit of space for movement. There are, however, three significant absences. These are dealt with a little more in my other contributions to the conference. (See 'The Necessity of Theory in Media Education' in this volume.) There is no mention here of *theory*, nor is there any mention of either *power* or *pleasure* in relation to the role and function of the media. Now that does not mean that the staff of the BFI and their colleagues in the teaching profession are unaware of these issues. But it does mean that they did not consider them to be sufficiently central to include them in their definition. I would wish to reinsert them in any definition I had to write.

Let me say a brief word about each of the three. First, power. The media have some powers which are in the hands of the producers and some powers which are in the hands of those who control the producers. This is not the time to attempt any detailed exposition. I would argue, however, that one of the main powers which the media exerts and which Media Education needs to address, is the power to define. The power to define the world extends from the most global issues to the most local; from the most overly significant to the most trivial and mundane. It is the understanding of how this defining process works, and in whose interests it works, which is for me at the very heart of Media Education. And it extends to the power of the media *not* to discuss certain issues. These are the significant absences to which I made brief reference earlier. What is *not* on the screen, in the newspapers or in the dramas that we can watch in the cinema, etc. is something which needs to be identified and analysed as much as that which is there. Media Education needs to try to identify how power is exercised through the defining process and to develop ways of understanding the extent to which the audience - all of us here and all those in society more widely - can accept or reject, and act upon or against media definitions. For I am not suggesting that, merely because the media have the power to define, that the audience will necessarily agree with what is being said or that they will believe the message. Not all of it. Not all of the time. But of course Media Education is also about recognising that there is not one audience for media messages, but several. And those different audiences may make different kinds of sense of different messages at different times. Media Education has to address the ways in which the power of the media is felt, by whom and under what conditions.

Secondly, I want to say something about theory in relation to Media Education. I will be taking this up in more detail in my next paper. The very word theory can generate hostile reactions from some teachers in England. It is variously construed as that which is most boring, that which is most doctrinaire, that which is most obscure and irrelevant in relation to Media Education. There are some reasons why this might be thought to be the case, for the teachers of theory in relation to the media have not always been the most inspiring, successful or open-minded. This has led to frustration and antagonism to the very concept of theory by some teachers. But of course, one cannot teach about the media without adopting theoretical positions. And then, these positions may be recognised or unrecognised, formulated or unformulated.

I will give just one example at the moment of what I am trying to get at. Suppose I attempt to teach my students that the media are corrupting their judgements and that they need to build defences against the corruption. Here I am adopting a theoretical position which places the media as prime formulators of opinion. This position may or may not be correct, but my argument is that Media Education has to consider constantly the theories on which it operates. So I would have to ensure that my teaching considered various theories about the influence of the media. I would have to present these in some form to my students and give them the opportunity to discuss and debate the merits of various theoretical positions about the influence of the media. If I do not associate media influence with a theoretical position all I am doing is making assertions on a kind of take-it-or-leave-it basis. Media Educators, I wish to argue, have to recognise and argue for or against theoretical positions, and then let students debate the theories. What they should not do is pretend that they are somehow outside or beyond theory. I hope this is an issue which will be taken up elsewhere in the conference.

Thirdly, I mentioned the notion of pleasure in relation to the media. One of the things which any media teacher soon discovers is that students *do* gain an enormous amount of pleasure from certain media at certain times. This may vary considerably in relation to access to the media, of course. You can't watch videos when you have neither TV nor video recorder. But Media Education can extend into the world of popular music, and all young people are involved with that in one way or another. They may also get pleasure from watching films or reading certain comics or magazines. At the very least, Media Education needs to recognise existing pleasures. This does not mean that the media educator would necessarily endorse all pleasures which students gain from the media. But neither should it mean that the Media Educator should condemn pleasure without debate, discussion and analysis. This is an issue which comes up when I consider representations of race and gender in the media.[1]

The comments I have offered so far have tried to pose certain questions about what Media Education might be and the purposes it might serve. I want to turn finally to who Media Education might be for. The answer to this is deceptively simple if I say it should be for everyone! But that is what I firmly believe. I believe in it as Chairperson for a Joint Department of English and Media Studies which recognises a continuum for more conventional notions of teaching about language and communication - literature, narrative and so forth - across to the various languages or signifying practices of the mass media. But I would wish to sustain my argument if I were a teacher of the visual arts, or history or geography. For media representations abound in every academic field, and media representations are part of the everyday experience of all citizens of whatever race or station in society. Education about and through these representations is a key factor in the development of all societies. It is of particular relevance I believe as South Africa moves into a period of rapid change towards democracy. For Media Education is about participation in the development of one's society. It is about being

[1] The presentation delivered by Bob Ferguson on *Race and Gender, Putting theory into practice* is not included in this volume as it relies on the audience being able to view his examples. Ferguson has dealt with this topic in other papers. One of these is Ferguson, B. *Multiracial Education*, 'Race and the Media: Some Problems in Teaching,' Vol. 9 Number 2 Spring 1981.

informed through the media and about the media. It is also about giving a voice to the maximum number of people in that development. For these reasons there must be as considerable and consistent an emphasis in Media Education on the *production* of media messages as there is on the analysis and understanding of media messages.

This raises, in conclusion, the issue of resources for media education and what might be the minimum resources necessary for work to begin. I think that if one can see advertisements on hoardings, listen to a transistor radio or read a newspaper, one is already well-equipped to enter the field of Media Education. If one has access to any simple form of printing one has also the means to begin to produce messages as part of one's education. It is for Media Educators to ensure that their students are encouraged to see the theoretical, analytical *and* production aspects of Media Education as of equal importance and indissolubly linked together.

It is also important that Media Education is seen as something which should permeate all levels of education, including informal and adult education.

It may include a detailed involvement with the history of national or international cinema, an engagement with the way in which advertisements operate or a concern with editorials in newspapers or journals. The field is enormously wide and the potential very great. But is also about involvement in the development and analysis of one's society and the way in which it is represented and understood through the media. As such it is a discipline of particular relevance to the future South Africa. And it is a discipline which, like the rest of educational provision, needs to be made equally available to all citizens.

I feel a strong commitment to the development of Media Education. Particularly here. Particularly now. It is just one of the pathways by which education can become truly democratic, open, fearless in its spirit of enquiry, enjoyment and intellectual rigour - and above all of relevance to *all* the people of South Africa. ■

Part II

Matters Educational

The section entitled *Matters Educational* deals with the issue of pedagogy. First of all, some educational planners offer reviews of the initiatives undertaken by the educational authorities they represent. These introductions were described as Visual Literacy, Teleliteracy, etc. partly perhaps in response to their movement away from the printed text.

The first initiatives relating to the 'visual' media emanated from the Natal Education Department which introduced studies of televisual and filmic materials in 1983 in certain schools as a pilot scheme, and the Transvaal Education Department with the inclusion of a film study component in 1986. The Cape Education Department's introduction of film studies in 1989 and the inclusion of film components on an experimental basis in the schools of the House of Delegates in Durban in 1990 followed. Now it would be mistaken to see these dates as the introductory dates for Media Education per se. This would ignore that varied and important work that has been done relating to the print media that has been part of the agenda for much longer. However, these focuses mentioned above did begin to incorporate filmic media. However, this inclusion needs to be considered carefully by teachers, as certain approaches to film remain part of elite culture in terms of some canon of excellence. The remit of Media Education is infinitely more inclusive and these articles indicate movement to other media forms.

Maytham's brief note on Media Education in KwaZulu schools offers an important element to these reviews. Just as any media text is telling in its very absences, this relevantly draws attention to the lack of such development within black African education, a lack that also occurs in all those other educational authorities not represented (as has been outlined in the Introduction).

The notion Ferguson raised of Media Education going beyond merely a field of study to an approach, is invoked by Perold's outline of the development of Media Education within SACHED. Perold emphasizes a pedagogy which has concentrated on empowerment of learners through developing critical abilities and the democratization of education. The methodologies she discusses are developed within other progressive projects. (Of those mentioned, projects undertaken by the Durban Media Trainers' Group, the Film and Allied Workers' Organization and the Community Arts Project are described or critiqued in the part entitled *Training and Empowering*.)

Following these reviews, other authors and Sutherland in particular pick up this concern with matters directly educational, those issues of the pedagogic modes that must be addressed. They concede that to teach critcal awareness and to develop these critical tools is impossible to achieve unless the mode of teaching encourages it. They concur with Ferguson that Media Education

> ...would seek, rather, to enable students to understand how the media operate - how individual media construct their messages.

The SACHED collective offer a political and educational contextualization for their argument for linkages between the content of popular media, people's culture, people's education and critical pedagogy.

No teacher can tell the student how and when to be aware and critical, or develop any critical understanding while she or he employs what has been described as a transmission model of teaching. Rejecting such an approach, van Zyl employs ethnographic understandings and insights into audiences and readings. Rather, each iconic system, he suggests, interacts with a specific audience in a specific way at a specific time within a specific culture. These concerns also find their echoes within the chapter by Ballot when she advocates a process orientation to Media Studies, rejecting the product-orientated approach she describes.

Media & Film Studies in Schools of the Cape Education Department

Nicol Faasen
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Introduction of media studies

The formal introduction of media and film studies in the Cape Education Department (CED) was preceded by enthusiastic work in this field for more than a decade by a number of progressive teachers. There was, therefore, a most valuable source of expertise among its teachers on which this department could draw. A further resource has been a number of lecturers at tertiary institutions who have been assisting these teachers. Other departments of education with experience in this field, especially the Transvaal Education Department, also assisted us in a most helpful way.

A further impetus has been the present English First Language syllabus, which provides for television and film study.

During 1988 and 1989, a sub-committee of the Senior English Prescribed Books Committee made recommendations on a more co-ordinated introduction of media and film studies in schools. An initial in-service course was held in March 1989 and guidelines were drawn up. All high schools received these guidelines.

'Official recognition' of media and film studies simply entailed that a film title was added to the list of prescribed titles for English First Language HG and SG in Standards 8 and 9. This meant that schools could use their money allocation for text books to buy video copies of the prescribed film and that pupils could study this in the place of one of the prescribed books. Initially, the Transvaal Education Department lead was followed by selecting *Chariots of Fire* for 1990. During this year (1990), teachers over the province could attend a series of in-service training sessions.

The CED therefore has a voluntary approach with the emphasis on experimenting and development and on using the experience and knowledge gained by teachers through their practice.

The films selected for 1991 are *Witness, The Never Ending Story* and *The China Syndrome* and for 1992 they are *Gallipoli, The Mission* or any one of the others previously prescried.

CED Guidelines

As mentioned above, a set of guidelines, drawn up by teachers and head office staff, were distributed to schools. Film studies are described in the guidelines as part of the broader course in Media Studies. The guidelines emphasise that there are three areas at which teachers can look. These are:

- pupils' reception and enjoyment of the film and their responses to it,
- pupils' critical analysis of the film, and
- pupils' personal integration of the meanings they attach to the film within their own lives.

Although the above order might in many ways be the ideal, one could expect that teachers might initially be inclined to stress the technical analysis to the exclusion of the other aspects. This should only be a temporary phase. These three areas should also be seen as integrated areas of concern and not three distinctly separate ones.

CED Aims

The following aims for media and film study are at present generally accepted in CED schools

General aim

The study of Media should be such that it combines
- aesthetic appreciation of the medium as a 'communication art form' and
- critical awareness of the techniques employed in its creation to achieve specific or implicit intentions.

Particular objectives

Particular objectives incorporate the following: Firstly, they attempt to achieve understanding of the varied nature of communication by providing a brief overview of
- contexts (social, historical...)
- components (transmitter, message, receiver...)
- media (television, bumper stickers...)
- styles (sitcom, editorial column...)
- models (encode - decode - feedback...),

They further aim to assist in bridging the gap between the written word (as in journalism and literature) and the visual medium.

A third objective incorporates the active promotion of participation in communication, and creative interaction with the medium. Fourthly, this field of study aims to develop and refine the skills of critical viewing, judgement and expression such as
- aesthetic appreciation
- informed perception of the power of the image.

The fifth objective includes the acquisition of an understanding of the basic 'grammar' or language of film and the vocabulary needed for critical appreciation:
- composition: perspective, lighting, distance, framing, organisation of space, focus, point-of-view
- movement: primary, secondary, tertiary
- editing: choice, montage, sequence, pace, juxtapositioning of significant images
- sound: on-screen, off-screen, music, silence
- setting: emotional and/or physical, by means of cultural milieu, realism, symbolism, expressionism, colour, black/white, time sequence
- genre: characteristic formulae or conventions
- acting: the star system, characterisation, gesture, costume,

(It is important that terminology should not be studied as an end in itself, but only to the extent that it is helpful to the pupil.)

A final objective involves learning to identify and explore the central features of character, theme, plot, setting and style in the film art form by means of the customary methods of literary critique.

New insights and future possibilities

It was previously mentioned that the CED is following an experimental approach. Syllabuses are seen more as guidelines than as prescriptive and limiting documents. Teachers are therefore encouraged to experiment and to explore all possilities in the syllabuses. We trust that we will learn from this approach and be able to implement teachers' practical knowledge in future developments.

It has already become apparent that we should be careful of overemphasising the electronic media, especially films, thereby neglecting media studies as a broader field of education. As chances of introducing a new subject like Media Studies are very slim at present, we should probably move towards a broader definition of 'language' than that which we are working with at present, namely one which covers mainly aural, oral and written codes. We should probably think of 'language' as covering a much wider continuum of codes and texts including a variety of visual media. The English First Language Third Paper - the 'grammar paper' - written by our Standard Ten pupils last year already shows this shift, as a considerable proportion of the questions were set on mainly visual media.

Such a widening of the scope of language teaching - while creating the danger of a further overburdening of our teachers - does, however, offer our pupils the possibilities of richer and more relevant educational experiences. ■

Transvaal Education Department
Visual Literacy & Film Study in Transvaal Schools

S P Gosher
Chief Superintendent of Education

Introduction

Visual Literacy (including Film Study) was introduced as an option into the National Core Syllabuses for English First Language (Standard 5-10) in 1986. When the syllabuses were provincialised, the Transvaal Education Department (TED) decided to make the component compulsory from standard 5 to 9, and optional in standard 10 (this was decided because a number of private schools write the matriculation examinations set by the TED).

The decision to include visual literacy and film study as a compulsory component had not been taken lightly or without reference to empirical evidence. By 1976, when the TED's deliberations first commenced, film study had already established itself as an essential and well-integrated component of the curricula of many British, American and Australian schools. While the statement that education was a creaking ramshackle construction - like an old windmill that goes on flapping its great arms long after the miller has left - was not entirely credible, it was believed that schools needed to teach children how to deal with their environment. Pupils need to be competent in using and understanding the uses of the dominant communication media of their own culture. Our age demands an all-media literacy which enables understanding and assessing messages in the media of what is tending to become a post-literate world. Objectivity in video and film is a fairly meaningless term: the director decides who shall be filmed and who shall not; what shall be asked and left unsaid; he decides on the lens and the camera angle. Lighting, soundtrack, dialogue and editing all make meaning. Thus the finished product enshrines a point of view, and it is the educator's task to train pupil's responses which tend to be formless, uncritical and perhaps even dangerously passive.

Empirical Study

In March 1977 the TED launched a pilot study in film teaching. Benoni, Greenside, Lyttleton Manor, Potchefstroom Girls and Sandringham High were chosen as the original participating schools. This first study cut away much undergrowth. An initial decision to study *Zorba the Greek* was rescinded as teachers felt too inexperienced. On a much humbler and more practical note, and also one that has subsequently proved to provide much of the basis for study up to standard 9, it was decided to use the two short films *The Lady or the Tiger* and *The Red Kite*.

This was an easy choice because, incredible as it may seem, these two films were the only suitable narrative films, short in colour, on 16mm, with a running time of under 30 minutes, that could be located in the country. Subsequently *The Rocking Horse Winner* and *The Ugly Little Boy* were obtained and used as the basis for internal, and later matriculation examinations.

It was then decided to extend the project over a wider socio-economic base. Five schools - Jeppe Girls, Alberton, Settlers Agricultural, John Orr Technical, and Western High Schools - participated from 1981-1985. Matriculation examinations, based on these short films, were written in 1984 and 1985, and the results, on analysis, were so pleasing and compelling that the decision to make film study compulsory in the 1986 syllabuses was easily taken.

Current Practices

Std 5-9. Visual literacy is initially based upon teaching the pupil two things: firstly, the physical ability to see the image and, secondly, to understand, analyse, synthesize and see relationships. The pupil must learn to respond to visual images. Cartoons, pictures, photographs, comic advertisements, etc. form the basis of scrutiny in this initial approach. Four pegs or markers are used in this methodology : colour, line, texture and composition. After pupils have been familiarized with these concepts, they are introduced to filmic technique. This encompasses, among other, the following: camera shots, camera angles, camera movement, transitions, special effects, lenses, focus and framing.

It must be stressed that the metalanguage of film is not an end in itself. The entire focus is on how meaning is made, and how it emerges via directorial intervention. The *why* of filmmaking is as integral to understanding as the *how*.

Traditional literacy techniques of analysis and interpretation run parallel to the cinematic approach. Theme, setting, plot and characterization feature, the whole idea being to blend the cinematic and literary in a seamless unit.

Initially, in the lower standards, still pictures, etc. form the focus of attention but teachers very quickly move on to films themselves. Films of short duration are studied, but a full-length film may be studied in standard 8 and 9. The general approach is to study films in terms of the sequences (of approximately four to six minutes) that constitute them.

Std.10. The above approach - a combined one of cinematic and literary preoccupations, based upon the unit of sequence - is recommended. Pupils should have reaped the benefit of at least five years of film study and thus should be able to move immediately into the grammar of film immersion. A prescribed full-length film is examined externally. Films prescribed so far have been *Chariots of Fire*, *Witness*, and *The Mission* which is prescribed for 1992/1993.

Material

Films Provided Centrally to Schools

Primary School Six Short Films (approximately 10 minutes each) *Dr de Soto; Corduroy; The Swineherd; The Amazing Bone; A Story,* *The Clown of God.*

High School *Big Henry and the Polka Dot Kid* (approximately 30 minutes).

Study Guides Provided Centrally to Schools

No. 36	Visual Literacy (Std. 2-10)
No. 37	Worksheets on Film Study
No. 42	*Big Henry and the Polka Dot Kid*
No. 43	Preparing a lesson Series : *Chariots of Fire*
No. 46	*Witness*
No. 53	*The Mission* (in preparation).

Training Video

A video, made by the Video Section of the College of Education for Further Training, is available to schools. Entitled 'Visual Literacy: A

Methodological Approach', it sketches the approach outlined above.

Other Material

Useful films are available from the National Film Library in Pretoria. Films used in TED schools and found to be of benefit are *The Red Kite, The Hunt, The Ugly Little Boy, The Rocking Horse Winner*, and *The Lady or the Tiger*. The *Minding Media* series is also very useful.

Conclusion

Film study, as practised in Transvaal schools, evidences the following advantages: it holds the interest of the pupils, and encourages involvement of all pupils; it raises the consciousness of pupils and enables them to discriminate and resist manipulation; the traditional skills of writing, language study and literary criticism are advanced by film study; the film has been shown as a valid medium by which literary themes and pre-occupations are conveyed; it equips our pupils with tools to interpret the increasingly dominant visual content of the communications media; and lastly, pupils and teachers have been led not to accept so blindly the second rate, the stereotyped and the cheap. ■

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No. 46 *'Witness'*
No. 53 *'The Mission'* (in preparation).

Visual Literacy: A Methodological Approach, Video produced by College of Education for Further Training, Pretoria.

The Natal Education Department & Media Education

Mary Johnson
Superintendent of Education: English

In order to describe the initiatives undertaken by the Natal Education Department (NED) in the area of Media Education, I shall first briefly attempt to characterize the NED's approach to curriculum development, hence to Media Education, before outlining our historical involvement in this field of study.

Within the NED, there are working committees made up of practising teachers, who are involved in addressing the question of what to teach and how best to teach it, on an on-going basis. Debate is energetic and infused with the experience of those engaged in working at the chalk face. Perhaps this is particularly the case for English, partly as a consequence of the fact that the Superintendent for English in Natal is at the same time the Chairman of the Curriculum Committee for English Main Language for the country and that I am privileged to chair the research committee for curriculum development. Furthermore, the NED has always endorsed a bottoms-up approach to curriculum development. This means that curriculum change is rooted in classroom experience. The NED requires of its teachers a high degree of professionalism, open-mindedness, readiness to explore, to challenge and to refine.

In 1974, the then Inspector for English with the NED, Keith Olivier, invited a number of high schools to experiment with the teaching of what we called, in those days, film and television literacy. I would like to underline that this was not the beginning of Media Education in the NED Considerable attention was given then in most high school departments of English to a study of the newspaper and the magazine and how they are constructed. In addition, teachers explored symbols, visual and verbal, and provoked forays into advertising and propaganda. Attention was given to the radio and pupils engaged in constructing radio programmes, advertisements, and reconstructing news programmes and popular serials.

What Keith Olivier initiated was an exploration of how the study of film and television might reconcile itself with our study of English. The experimenting schools were given no more than a broad request to explore what options lay open to them, and as then Head of English at one, I can speak from a position of authority (or victimisation). My English department and I were anxious and concerned. As we stumbled and blundered we felt very much as Alice does in the following exchange from Alice in Wonderland:

> 'Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?'
> 'That depends a good deal on where you want to get to', said the Cat.
> 'I don't much care where -' said Alice.
> 'Then it doesn't matter which way you go', said the Cat.

'- So long as I get somewhere', Alice added as an explanation.

Then, many of the secondary and tertiary texts available to us were written in a language which made them inaccessible - and so we were thrust back on our own resources - the teachers, the department and our very active English Teachers' Association, NATE.

The experimentation provoked great interest and debate. NATE organised a meeting at which members of the experimenting schools shared their ideas and then my predecessor, Dr Manfredd Schroenn, was appointed Subject adviser for English and, at the same time, given the task of chairing the committee responsible for revising the English Curriculum at national level.

That revised English syllabus of 1983 was significantly different from the very short two and a half page document which had preceded it. The 1983 syllabus, and its subsequently amended form (as of 1988), is based on the assumption

> that the receptive skills (listening and reading) and the expressive skills (talking and writing) cannot be acquired in isolation but need to be developed in an integrated process including the pupilsw own experience, the rest of their school experience as well as their experience and needs beyond school.

The syllabus is a goals based syllabus which takes cognizance of the personal growth model. The syllabus of 1983 frequently made specific reference to film and television study in the commentaries which explained the goals and suggested how a consideration of film/television, or indeed all media, reconciled itself naturally with the study of English. However, that syllabus did make the study of film optional for a number of reasons.

Firstly, certain schools (and departments) are financially advantaged. This meant that purchase of televisions and video-recorders could be accommodated in the budgets of schools where basic resources such as books, were in plentiful supply. The research committee felt it important that Departments be allowed the option which would give them the opportunity to prioritise their needs.

Secondly, as teachers were in the main not au fait with the demands of Media Education it was felt that time should be allowed for the training of teachers before making Media Education compulsory.

In addition, the research committee felt that space should be allowed for further exploration and consideration as to how to implement Media Education. By not being prescriptive it was hoped that creative investigation would be facilitated.

The Phase 3 core syllabus, approved in 1990 by the Committee of Education Heads at national level, has removed the reference to 'optional'. In addition, the need to study the film - both on the large screen and small screen, and television has been made much more explicit.

Natal's position in relationship to Media Education mirrors that of the core curriculum. From the introduction of the revised syllabus of 1983 considerable encouragement was given to teachers to explore the possibilities open in Film/Television Study. The major problem Natal teachers have encountered is the question of copyright.

If teachers are to explore texts imaginatively and creatively they cannot afford to pay perhaps R250 for every video they might want to use, particularly as they are unlikely to use the full tape. In brief, developments in Natal have been as follows.

The Technikon organised a conference on Media Education in 1987. This was attended by many of our teachers and most of the papers were published as an NED Bulletin 44.

NATE has hosted 2 major conferences (1987, 1988) and one mini-conference (1989) on the subject of Media Education.

I conducted a survey in Primary Schools in 1988. Accordingly, eleven schools indicated that they were studying the video/film and 25 schools that they were engaged in studying some form of Media Education. Significantly courses dealing with Media Education are offered at both Colleges of Education involved with teacher training.

In 1989, nine regional seminars for primary teachers were organised on Media Education. These seminars were voluntary and were organised by Regional Co-ordinators who also serve on the Primary Subject Committee. The form the seminars took varied from region to region in terms of the specific needs of the teachers of the group. At present a document is being compiled for distribution to all schools of the reports compiled by the co-ordinators on the seminars.

There are some fourteen high schools which are engaged in extensive experimentation with the film/video. Material has been collected by me and a publication, *Mediating Media*, is in the pipeline.

At this stage Natal is reticent about including film study as part of the external examination. Media Education in its widest sense can comprise part of the school assessment which constitutes fifty percent of the final mark. The NED emphasises the continuum of reading from the printed text to the celluloid and the plastic.

I know that at times my teachers might prefer the security of a prescription but that mostly they know, as Gide so aptly states:

> One doesn't discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore for a very long time.

Uneasy and uncertain we might be at times, but at least we won't say of ourselves as the butler does in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*:

> I can't even say I made my own mistakes.

Really - one has to ask oneself, what dignity is there in that? ■

Media Education in KwaZulu education?

Alistair Maytham
Lecturer, Eshowe College of Education

At this point there is no Media Education course being run by the Kwazulu Education Department. In some colleges, notably Eshowe, Media education is being dealt with to some extent in the Special English (English for Communication) course but the focus here is on comprehension rather than interpretation. Media forms such as videos and newspapers are used as a valuable source material with which to develop the competency of student teachers. At this stage little is being done in the creation of a critical awareness of the way in which the media operate although it is acknowledged that there is a great need for this in black education. ■

Developing Media Education in the 1990s: An Alternatine view

Helene Perold
Assistant Director, SACHED Trust

The SACHED Trust has had a history of involvement with media in education, mainly because of its work in the field of distance education. Over the last 15-20 years the organisation has developed extensive experience in print-based educational programmes. Learning materials have been developed and delivered in the form of study guides, course books, magazines and newspaper education programmes. More recently, during the 1980s, SACHED ventured into the field of the visual and audio-visual media. Here our work took the form of slide-tape productions, photographic exhibitions, educational videos in the fields of poetry and literature, women's studies, labour histories and study skills. Attempts were also made to popularise visual collections in African history.

Soon our work began to move beyond the provision of alternative audio-visual material. We started engaging in a media practice which sought to empower participants and learners in an interactive educational process. This took a number of forms e.g. a documentary photography project in oral history with tertiary level students; the exploration of appropriate methodologies in the field of worker education (e.g. role play, the use of media in group discussion and learning circles, etc). SACHED educators became involved in the conceptualisation of educational media production and we learnt how difficult it was to conceptualise objectives, production and use in a holistic manner. More recently we have been experimenting with a wide range of media in literacy work as well as at the secondary school level.

Over time, three central issues have emerged, all of which need to be addressed by educational planners:

- the need to restore a learning culture
- the struggle for democratic education
- working for empowerment.

Restoring a Learning Culture

> Learning as a social activity is an important ingredient in generating a sense of community. For the past 15 - 20 years education in this country has been disrupted, undermined and underdeveloped and during this time the basis of learning as a social activity has been destroyed. (John Samuel)

We have lost a whole generation and face now the crucial task of reconstructing the educational process in our country.

Building Democratic Education

But what kind of education are we concerned to develop? People's education or democratic education are the terms used to characterise the goals here. They articulate the aspirations of exploited and oppressed South Africans who now see the opportunity to participate in shaping the democratic entity in our country.

What do we mean by democratic education?

We are not referring here to a crude notion of students dictating to teachers what should be taught and how. We are talking about engendering the mechanisms, attitudes and abilities that will enable our people to participate fully in the processes shaping the future of our country.

Let me list some of the values which we believe are essential in this regard. In our view they apply as much to media education as to all other forms of educational endeavour:

- Active and participatory learning which builds on knowledge and experience already gained
- Development of skill and confidence
- Providing access to information
- Demystifying knowledge
- Presenting contesting viewpoints and finding innovative ways of revealing an author's or producer's point of view
- Encouraging independent and critical thinking
- Providing choices and possibilities

Empowerment

In many organisations in our country - trade unions, community organisations, youth organisations, etc. - learners are struggling against the dominant visual, audio and verbal messages. The dominant culture of apartheid has structured the way information is presented and the way we receive it. Learners are seeking to make sense of the world through the images presented and to be critical of the messages conveyed. We need to understand the changing role of media here, particularly in regard to methodology. Basic worker education has as its purpose the strengthening of organisations, not the passing of exams. The employment of media such as pictures and video material by educational facilitators for the purpose of developing critical thinking can be a powerful mechanism for strengthening learning in this context. A commitment to any empowering media practice is critical in building the capacity of learners to participate in the democratic process.

What then are the Issues Presently Confronting Us?

The need to develop new curricula for our education system is being voiced more and more loudly by teacher organisations, service organisations and a wide range of educational agencies. The search for creative ways of 'stretching' or challenging restrictive curricula is no longer sufficient. We need now to move beyond integrating media education into existing subjects and curricula. In other words, we need to look at media education in its own right. Media studies and cultural studies are increasingly being ranked as discrete areas of study – both in school and outside it.

But who will be developing the parameters and content for these curricula? It is our view that their development should not be confined to education departments - neither those which presently exist, nor the education department which will emerge with the new dispensation. Commissions set up by the NECC in maths, history and English indicate the potential for more democratic ways of evolving new curricula. Indeed, a range of organisations have already begun experimenting with new curricula and methodologies in response to developments over the past years.

A number of these organisations have considerable experience in progressive educational work. They include:

- SACHED, which has worked in the field of worker education, literacy, secondary school distance-education programmes, tertiary education, etc

- The Foundation for Education with Production which has produced a Cultural Studies Handbook (which still needs to be tested in the South African context)
- Media and cultural training programmes of the Community Arts Project in Cape Town
- The Culture and Working Life Project in Durban
- The Congress of SA Writers (COSAW)
- COSATU's cultural wing
- Various media organisations in the different centres such as the Durban Media Trainers Group and the Cape Educational Computer Society.

If we are to ensure that the development of curricula is to be a meaningful, interactive process, these organisations – together with those which represent the interests of parents, students, teachers and workers – must be brought into the process of building the new educational agenda. ■

Report on Media Studies in the Department of Education & Culture, House of Delegates

Lorraine Singh
Assistant Superintendent of Education

In 1989 the English Subject Committee of the Department of Education and Culture decided to initiate a film study course in high schools. The facility for this already exists in the current English syllabus under the heading *alternate genre* in the literature component. The idea of a film replacing a more traditional text had excited a great deal of interest, particularly in the Transvaal where the work of the Transvaal Education Department in this field had developed considerably.

Because of our relative inexperience in this field it was decided to introduce the course through a pilot study in a few selected schools. This would allow us an opportunity to test the feasibility of such a course as well as provide us with pointers on how to implement the course in the future.

Six schools, located in different socio-economic areas in and around Durban, were selected after consultation with principals and teachers concerned. The idea was to work on a feature film at Std 8 level initially and hopefully diffuse this to more schools each year. It was hoped to extend the programme upward to include Std. 9 pupils and eventually Std. 10 pupils.

The film chosen for this project is called *Breaking Away*, a 1970 Peter Yates film which later inspired a TV series of the same name. The film also boasts an Award-Winning screenplay by Stephan Tesich.

The texts selected for the course included the following:

For pupils: *Image Wise* (van Zyl 1987)
For teachers: *Real Images* (McMahon & Quinn 1986)
Reel Life (During & Craig 1990)

Teachers were also given a comprehensive reading list.

Preparatory work for the launching of the course included providing teachers with as much resource material as possible beforehand and also conducting a series of workshops for teachers. I would like to elaborate a little on the actual content of these workshops as this will give you an indication of the approach being used.

1. The first workshop was held in April after teachers had viewed the film and done their own preparatory reading. We began with their responses to the film as a viable text and the problems they foresaw. Incidently these dealt largely with the technical aspects such as film language and form. The workshop included viewing segments of the film and commenting on both the narrative and filmic aspects - very much as a lesson in the classroom might do. Teachers who initially expressed some trepidation about being able to 'analyse' a sequence found it wasn't so difficult or foreign after all. A cue sheet for each sequence was used, in which responses were noted under columns labelled sound track, image track and meaning/interpretation.

What emerged from the initial exercise was that teachers were at home in the narrative aspects of analysis but were uneasy about film form and language. The rest of the workshop was devoted to film vocabulary and viewing of sequences with emphasis on how camera movement, camera angles, lighting and montage work together to create meaning.

2. The second workshop held in May was less specific in that it looked more broadly at film theory. A paper on Narrative Structures in Film was presented by Jeanne Prinsloo who also assisted teachers by providing them with excellent 'how to' exercises of the type found in *Reading a Film* by Ian Wall and Stephan Kruger. This was followed by a 'hands on' type workshop on 'Making a Video' conducted by Bill Isherwood.

3. The third workshop held in August about 5 weeks into the actual course, centred on feedback from the teachers. This was very much a 'sharing' session in which worksheets, teaching strategies and ideas were exchanged. The commencement of the 3rd quarterly test gave rise to much discussion about questions and testing. This was an informal workshop and it was agreed that teachers would continue to meet informally in small groups to share ideas. Advisers would be called in if necessary.

The response to the course has so far been generally very positive. Pupils and teachers have responded with enthusiasm to the project.

Critique of the Course

Upon reflection, it seems that we have jumped feet first into the deep end by introducing a complete feature film in the fourth phase. The suggestion from Overport Secondary that the study of 2/3 short films would be more beneficial is well taken. I would also venture to suggest that the film course be introduced into third phase English on a progressive basis.

(The fact that film is being studied as a text as part of the literature component does not in any way reduce the attention given to other forms of the media in the other aspects of English, particularly language. Exercises in propaganda, advertising, the use of emotive language and so on still form part of basic English teaching.)

We have taken this tentative step in media education through the film study course. We are aware that whilst the course is working well it would perhaps have been better to have introduced media studies at a lower level. Our 3 main problems as I see them at the moment are:

- A dire lack of physical resources and facilities in our schools, which would otherwise have allowed large numbers of pupils access to equipment at the same time. At the moment each of our schools has to share a singe VCR and monitor amongst 6-8 classes of Std. 8 (± 200 pupils). This equipment is also used by other pupils in other subjects.
- The primary aim of the film course at present is to develop critical thinking in the minds of our pupils. It seems to me that by concentrating on critical analysis only we are giving pupils only part of the key to understanding. We need to provide the opportunity for pupils not only to deconstruct but also to *construct* their own meanings.
- Budgetary constraints may kill this course: there is no money in the Department at the present time for new stock/library allocations. Unless schools can be prevailed upon to purchase films and pupil texts and reference books out of their own school funds there is little hope of the

film course being rapidly expanded to include all schools.

Conclusion

I am convinced that in spite of the problems just listed, this aspect of English must and will continue. We cannot go backwards. The longed-for change to a unitary system of education, with all that this means in terms of a new and relevant curriculum, can only mean that media studies will have to be given their rightful place. I sincerely hope that once this change comes, projects such as our film study course will help us meet the exciting challenges in Education that lie ahead. ■

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Media in People's Education - A Discussion

SACHED Collective

Polital Context 1986 - 1991

There have been fundamental changes in the hegemonic culture since 1986. Neither the school, nor the media, nor the other institutions of civil society emerged untouched. Vicious restrictions on the press and camera contributed to major ideological realignments. These reached into the mainstream mass media, and even into the state itself. Numbers of former ideologists of the ruling class began to discover 'yardsticks derived increasingly from African challenges and demands' (M.Chapman, 1989), as they were forced to recognise that the colonised 'Other' was becoming a 'Subject', was entering history. At the same time, a falling white readership of newspapers has been accompanied by a massive growth of state television.

One of the main victims of the states of emergency was the media. The media restrictions sought to smother insurrection through denial of information about its existence. It was a time when context apparently silenced text, when

> What is feared by the government is the dissemination of factual information by the media, because whatever happens, people must not be allowed to find out. (Chapman, 1989)

A small but vigorous alternative press, born during the states of emergency, bore the brunt of state censorship. The alternative press ranged from a few independent news agencies and weekly or monthly papers to trade union publications. Travelling photographic exhibitions, often seen at cultural festivals and political meetings, became an 'alternative and accessible archive' (Weinberg 1989 pp. 66). They spurred the development of the tradition of documentary photography, of photographic collectives and of other popular forms of communication such as posters and calendars. Various oral history projects were initiated. So were community and worker based video and film collectives. Especially noteworthy was the 'incredible rise in awareness and consciousness in the use of video' in trade unions (VNS 1989, pp. 14).

History will recall the later years of the 1980s as the period when artistic culture was forced into the vanguard of the political struggle of the oppressed. It was a time when 'the Emergency clampdown and vicious media gags ... spurred artists to commandeer artistic space for voicing political ideals' (Meintjies 1990a, pp. 31/2), and a time when

> ...much of our writing, especially our poetry, became the newspapers of the struggle, taking forward campaigns, popularising organisational formations, celebrating leaders who were in constant battle against repression. Other art forms also took an activist stance...(F.Meintjies April 1990b, pp. 119)

In this crucible of national struggle, English was being purged of its colonial and consumerist taints. Afrikaans was being reclaimed by its black working class constituency. Recognition also began to grow that the rural areas are not necessarily traditional backwaters, nor the handmaiden of the urban. Associated with this, the indigenous African languages have started to come into their own.

Strident and propagandistic, a culture of resistance proclaimed its deep roots in history. Cultural workers made people think, strengthened their solidarity, and entertained (CWLP 1990, pp. 100), often through oral performance, and often in the indigenous African languages. A people's culture initially took refuge at cultural festivals on university campuses. But increasingly a nation in the making celebrated at mass gatherings, in local organisations, and through the popular media.

The cultural struggle was not only being forged in the ideological factories of civil society, but also on the industrial shopfloor. Further, as unions grew, the attempt to control and reshape traditional or 'ethnic' symbols assumed an increased importance in class struggle. Reappropriating collective and oral cultural forms, worker culture was

> sharply probing the reality of workers experiences at the cutting edge of capitalist exploitation. It has also been instrumental in defining democratic organisation as being part of the essence of progressive culture (Meintjies and Hlatshwayo 1989, pp. 4).

Activists found that the use of the electronic media and the press were invaluable in developing their organisational skills. Moving out of the universities, the plain paper-copier started making an impact on organisations from around 1981. Together with the OHP, it facilitated the ingenious production of political banners. Political symbols appearing on buttons, posters and t-shirts also proliferated. By 1985, the photocopier found its way into many offices of service, political and labour organisations.

The use of personal computers also spread outside of universities. Especially the computer facility of DTP enabled the cheap high-tech alternative newspapers to be produced. At the same time, however, large numbers of organisational posters, pamphlets and newspapers were either seized or banned, and the offices and homes of media workers were petrol bombed or raided. But the variety of alternative media weapons which were used did increase. Media training workshops were begun all around the country. These workshops were often organised by members of the National Media Forum.

These organisations are now struggling to come to terms with the fact that their 'alternative' or 'oppositional' role is changing. Major media conferences have begun to explore the role of the media in education, development, reconstruction and nation building in the new South Africa. Other insistent themes are the need for a strong and independent press and broadcasting system, and for more effective training to counter dominant media practices. Some of the alternative papers are investigating their role in distance education. Some are also taking steps to recast their images away from the often boring and hack journalism of the left. The search for appropriate media, which will enable especially rural people to express their preferences with reference to development issues, has begun.

Educational Context 1986 - 1991

Born in 1986, People's Education is a dynamic concept and practice whose development was bedevilled by the states of emergency. At the heart of people's education is the struggle for democracy in education. Hand in hand with the building of democratic structures in the community, people's education seeks to redefine classroom practices and methodology, to recreate a learning culture, and to challenge the ideological content of school curricula.

Together with the media, community and youth organisations were among those most crippled by the states of emergency. But, as with the media, the jackboot of repression had contradictory effects. On the one hand, the development of mass organisation in the community, and democratic practices in the schools, was hindered. Equally effected was the challenge to the ideological content of school curricula. People's education awareness programmes had begun to be incorporated into the timetables of some schools. However, these were obliterated under gunpoint when troops moved onto school campuses. At a time when the cultural struggle outside the boundaries of schools was at its peak, it was clear that cultural resistance of the 1976 genre would not be brooked by the state in the schools.

On the other hand, innovative ways of 'stretching' curricula continued unpublicised. For example, career guidance by service organisations in some schools served to deepen understanding that the linkages between education and work are not neutral. Teacher resource forums also encouraged teachers to transform curricula through the development of alternative teaching materials. Creative methods were used. These ranged from the use of the computer to the holding of teachers' cultural festivals.

Further, media training workshops in some parts of the country helped to strengthen student representative councils. The mushrooming of numerous study groups contributed to the growth of co-operative forms of learning. In these and other ways were the undemocratic structures in the schools undermined. But many of these developments were slow, hidden or initiated by educators in universities or service organisations, or outside of mass organisations. In addition, the state and capital sought to co-opt the innovative and democratic elements of people's education in a number of ways. Recently, teacher organisation has taken giant strides forward. PTSAs are also consolidating.

People's education seeks to address itself to both formal and non-formal education, to the education of children and adults. Non-formal or open education has usually served to supplement weaknesses in the formal state school system. But this relationship has been changing, especially since 1986. The late 1980s saw the virtual collapse of Bantu education. Crisis also began to invade other educational departments. Overcrowding, the extreme shortage of facilities and trained teachers, and the breakdown of authority and discipline were unprecedented in black schools. Student activists were among those most badly affected as new ways of denying access to students were implemented. Learners utilised informal learning networks to attempt to deal with the crisis. Many non-formal learning groups were set up by students or their parents or community organisations all over the country.

It is argued however, that developments in the sphere of worker education have been the most telling reason for the fact that the non-formal is now a key site of educational transformation. Worker organisation began to assume a leading role in political struggle around 1986/7. The main thrust of worker education is the building of organisation, although the need for formal education has become more pronounced. People's education needs to address the issue of worker education.

Media in People's Education

New space is being won for effective education in domestic or organisational settings, as well as in the schools. This is one result of the changing relationship between formal and non-formal education, and between education and the other organs of consent such as the media. Use of the mass media such as television and radio may be part of the solution to our educational problems. Large numbers of learners can be educated rapidly and quite cheaply. Also, the ways in which audio-visual media and non-technological media or oral cultural forms can facilitate democratic and collective learning need to be explored.

Such methods would be useful in the 'training of trainers' in worker and community education; in creative mass education methodologies; in distance education; in developing a reading culture; in creating literacy codes for children and adults; and in participatory research methods. But with the learning environment moving out of the school, the issue of providing effective learning and teaching environments is going to become a crucial one. With the rise of community based and working class 'intellectuals', the teacher's role is a changing one. Use of the media adds to this effect.

Teachers have ceased to monopolise the mediation or transmission of content. The issue of methodology has assumed increasing importance. However, the increasing emphasis on process and technique in progressive education, which is encouraged by the use of technology, should not be at the expense of content because

> ...those who focus on content give priority to challenging the dominant ideology and developing critical ideas, while those who focus on... processes give priority to challenging the hierarchical social relations of the classroom...
>
> (The former) fail to see the ideological dimensions of the learning experience itself, (whilst) the processes-focussed group (fail) to locate classroom social relations within a critical analysis of the wider society...The content of classroom instruction must be paralleled by a pedagogical style which is consistent with a radical political vision (Youngman 1986. pp. 4-5).

We need to draw linkages between the content of the popular media, people's culture, people's education and a critical and democratic pedagogy. There is a general feeling now that the culture of resistance should transform itself, to better meet the demands of the present period, and to more effectively challenge ruling class culture. Probably the most urgent need is for the upgrading of the skills and for training. More resources to do this are needed. But mass access to the means of ideological production shall not become a reality without greater provision for literacy training.

It is argued that the use of the mass media such as television or radio would be one way of widening the cultural scope of people's education. But to be educationally valuable, people's culture needs to be reflected in the media. Together with this, an active, creative, critical and collective learning should be fostered. If people's culture is not equated with the mass consumerist culture currently purveyed on state television, it should be accepted that education can entertain.

Hegemony is both a political and pedagogical process. The act of learning is a fundamental aspect of hegemony :

> Pedagogy as a form of cultural production and exchange... addresses how knowledge is produced, mediated, refused and represented within relations of power both in and outside of the school (Giroux and Simon 1988).

Consent is learnt. It is learned through the knowing of the mind, which is usually nurtured in the schools. It is also learned through pleasure or entertainment, or the knowing and feeling of the heart and body. Such affective learning is not valued by the schools. Popular culture is the particular domain of affective learning. People's Education needs to mould the whole person. It also needs to better recognise that the language of education is the language of culture creation, and that cultural identity is formed not only in the institutions of civil society, but also at the base of society.

The ties between popular or people's culture, the processes of consent, and a critical and democratic pedagogy, need to be traced. Studies of popular culture should not be seen merely as analyses of texts, or as forms of consumption. There is also the need to understand how student identities, cultures and political experiences provide the basis of learning. Bantu Education, as a type of mass education, attempted to domesticate an increasingly radical working class culture by incorporation. But it is argued that this hidden curriculum of social control has long been contested, particularly in the realm of student culture.

Ways of incorporating people's culture in the development of a democratic pedagogy need to be explored. This can be done through the development of suitable Media Studies and Cultural Studies courses, and the organisation of more workshops, seminars and performances. A consolidated curriculum should be developed by cultural, media and teacher organisations where

> ...culture is seen as an elaborate system of social meaning including books, films, television, music, videos, comics, language, and art...(There should be) a co - ordinated search for primary materials in the various categories... These selected materials must be introduced into the national educational curriculum from school to universities... (Ndebele 1989. pp. 29)

All ways of reading text, and context, should be explored. This implies the widening of the concept of literacy, and the co-ordinated development of literacy campaigns. The historical growth of a reading culture in South Africa needs to be traced. It should be recognised that a reading culture does not preclude oral culture (Perold 1990, pp. 25), nor the 'secondary orality' (Ong 1982, pp. 160) associated with the electronic media. Literacy also needs to be unshackled from its association with schooling, high or colonial culture, and cognitive development. ■

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Media Education - A Progressive Terrain

Janet-Louise Sutherland

It was the British media educationist Masterman (1985, pp. 16) who suggested that teachers may become expendable if they are unable to prove that they have importance beyond being mere transmitters of information. After all computerized education systems are able to perform this function at a fraction of the cost of a teaching force. However, what these systems are unable to do, is to develop a critical consciousness in pupils, which will keep pace with the developments in information and communication technology.

At present schools are not taking adequate care of this vital aspect in pupils' education. Instead they cling to traditional modes of teaching which are dominated by print and emphasize a set of basic skills, embodied in the three Rs - reading, writing and arithmetic. These basic skills are seen as being fundamental to any pupil's education. However, because these skills are seen as being basic, we must not mistake them for being neutral. The emphasis placed on these skills is a conscious choice, made to produce a specific educational result. The pupils we are teaching will be adults in the 21st century. Will these basic skills be adequate for survival then, and are they in fact adequate in our present society? Surely, what education should aim for is the development of aptitudes and abilities for life then. While schools still stress the importance of print, the visual medium has become the most powerful influencing force outside of schools, with print in newspapers and magazines becoming increasingly more visual and great advances being made in computer graphics. Why then, if schools stress the importance of criticizing print, do they neglect the criticism of visual and other media? Surely, by understanding how media works, pupils will be more able to understand their world, which is largely constructed by the media.

In this respect, media teachers should form a vanguard in education. While traditional education stresses content as the end, Media Education sees content as a means to an end - the end being critical autonomy. Media Educators will have to reassess their roles as teachers. They will have to take risks, in order to make their pupils take a greater responsibility for their learning. This, I foresee as being one of the greatest challenges facing the media teacher on their entry into the progressive terrain of Media Education. Pupils are wary of taking such responsibility after being disempowered for so long by a system where the teacher was the expert. Given this understanding, there was always a right answer, and what was being taught was accepted as natural, neutral and the truth. Just as it is important to understand the full implications of the ideological power of the media, so too, must the media teacher confront the ideological power of education. As media teachers, we need to realize that education is never neutral, but instead political. It is political in the sense that it is either liberating and develops critical thinking or that it is domesticating and serves to perpetuate the status quo. (Freire and Shor 1987, pp. 9-14). However, it is almost certain that it will be found to further the aims of those in power and can thus never be value-free. It must be stressed that,

> the attempt to 'imprint' ideas, whether reactionary or socialist, is not education but propaganda. If we encourage this form of 'learning' in schools, then our students will be vulnerable to other forms of manipulation even more. It is upon the ability of students leaving our educational institutions to think critically and make their own decisions that the future of our society depends. (Masterman,1985, pp. 37)

If media teachers commit themselves to developing genuinely progressive educational methods, they will play a vital role in the future of education and society, as a whole.

If we look to the origins of media education, we see that initial studies grew out of distrust of the media. It was established by educationalists who viewed mass media as low culture; something which pupils needed to be inoculated against. Pupils needed to be warned and protected against the negative effects of the media and shown what was of high cultural and moral value. All that this condemnation served to do, was to mythologize the media and heighten curiosity about it. As media teachers, we need to remove all stress from questions of value. We need to challenge the validity of a concept such as 'universal truth'. Are truth and value not specific to a particular group of people working within a particular criteria of thought and feeling in a particular society? Postman feels that the statement, 'All value is contextual' from Riesman's book *Individualism Reconsidered* (1954) illustrates the point that not even the noblest ideal or clearest truth is unarguable. Bereft of serious opposition, our ideas and truths lose their vitality and, eventually, their meaning (Postman 1979, pp. 22).

Instead of making value judgements we need to increase understanding of how media work. Pupils must be assisted to develop an understanding of how the media produces meaning, how it is organized, how it constructs reality and most importantly how this reality is understood by those who receive it. So, when I speak of pupils needing to *understand* the media, I mean that they should investigate the structures which make up what is known as media, rather than making an evaluative judgement about its cultural and moral quality. This in itself is a serious challenge to traditional methods of teaching where criticism of texts is still locked into the Leavisite tradition, a tradition which allows for particular texts to be chosen according to their literary merits, and then for a close reading of these worthy texts to be undertaken. Pupils are told that the texts chosen, are chosen because they are classics and thus constitute good literature, which is of high cultural value, because of the accuracy with which they reflect the human experience. (Leavis 1948, pp. 10). The criticism which is generally undertaken, is carried out in such a way that it elucidates, for the pupil, general truths and serves to refine taste. Pupils are taught that if an adequate reading of the text is made, then and only then can these general truths be revealed. (Bradbury and Palmer 1970, pp. 29).

Media teachers will need to go beyond an investigation of content and investigate those forces which control the media. The ideological power of the media as well as of education lies in the apparent naturalness of representations. If the illusionism of media is to be investigated, then those studying the media will have to deconstruct the texts with which they are dealing. They will have to reverse the process which created the final product and show the ways in which the meaning was produced. In looking at the selective nature of the media, areas such as editing, censorship, self-censorship and propaganda will have to be studied. Pupils will have to be made aware that that which they are viewing or experiencing is not reality but a representation thereof. This will be particularly necessary when investigating newspapers and television, as both mediums strive for absolute authenticity.

However, as media educators, our primary objectives should not simply be critical awareness and understanding, but rather critical autonomy. Teachers need to encourage critical insights, self-confidence and a critical faculty which will extend beyond school learning and develop as the pupil matures and their interests change. In order for these critical faculties to develop it will often be necessary for pupils to look at information which is outside the texts they are studying. Access to and the ability to work with these kinds of information is of the utmost importance in any Media Education course. Often information gaps need to be filled by the teacher and media teachersmust accept that critical autonomy is not automatic but is something which develops slowly.

However, our task as media educators does not end with the attainment of critical autonomy. We need to move beyond the realm of critical consciousness, into the more creative and practical realms. Ultimately, pupils should be encouraged to extend their creative powers, by creating their own media within the framework of their criticism of the existing media. Their own media should thus challenge the existing media and not simulate it. By using media equipment to produce their own media material, pupils may develop even greater insight into some of the problems and issues, experienced by those who work in media agencies. This hands-on experience may also help with their deconstruction of media texts and bring home more clearly the fact that the media is highly selective, not only because of the ideological restrictions placed on it, but also because the equipment used to record events has certain limitations. This is only one aspect of interaction with the media, which can be investigated. Pupils may have challenged the media and the society reflected in it, within the confines of the classroom. Pupils must now be encouraged to actively challenge and interact with the media. Letters to the press and to companies, posters, photographs, articles or video material which pupils feel warrant exposure by the media, should be submitted to newspapers, magazines and television stations. Pupils can become involved in their local newspapers or in a school publication. Whatever their contribution, they will be contributing toward the democratization of the media and of society. This is not the only way in which Media Education stimulates democratic ideas. The discourse, between the teacher and the pupils and between fellow pupils, which is integral to Media Education introduces pupils to democratic concepts, such as bargaining, negotiation and compromise.

When faced with these prospects, many

teachers lack confidence as they feel that their knowledge of media technology and media structures is inadequate. However, media teachers need to accept that in teaching media they do not need to control the learning environment as an expert, but rather enter into it as a learner, alongside their pupils. They become a facilitator of the learning process, rather than dominating it and selecting what is to be learnt. The success of Media Education depends upon those who teach it adopting a non-autocratic mode towards teaching. The media teacher needs to accept that 'non-hierarchical teaching modes are necessary and that a methodology which promotes reflection, critical thinking - lively, democratic, group-orientated action' (Masterman 1985, pp. 27) is integral to Media Education. This scenario is the antithesis of the traditional teaching/learning environment, with the teacher as expert and the confidence of knowing that there is a right answer. In Media Education there are few right answers. If we aim to make pupils critically autonomous, then we have to break their dependence on the teacher. We have to dispense with the rigidity of the traditional learning environment and allow for group dialogue to take place. This is not as easy or as safe as that of traditional lessons where the outcome of proceedings is highly predictable. The Media Education learning environment needs to be flexible. Learning also needs to placed in the pupils' field of experience and their preferences need to be considered. Teachers need to accumulate as many perceptions as there are in any group and in so doing they will have at their disposal a wider range of perceptions, cultural viewpoints and experiences than any one teacher can ever hope to achieve on their own. Teachers and pupils need to enter into genuine dialogue on all aspects of course content. Pupils must feel free to question the views of the teacher and must begin to make judgements and analyses without depending on the teacher/expert for clarification. If pupils are able to find information and resources on their own and take responsibility for their learning environment the need for traditional transmission teaching will cease.

What I have been proposing is an ideal. I have been looking at the perfect teacher, working with the perfect class, in the perfect school. When I look at the realities of teachers and pupils and schools, especially in the South African context, my ideal suddenly becomes remote. In South Africa, we have schools with wonderful audio-visual rooms, equipped with the latest in technology. And, we have schools without electricity and drastic shortages in books and desks. We have pupils who go home to stereo systems, televisions and video recorders, not to mention personal computers and video cameras. And there are those who go home to homes devoid of any modern luxuries or appliances. When approaching the issue of Media Education, there are a host of problems relating to the availability of equipment and funds which have to be investigated and overcome wherever possible. Other problems likely to be encountered, once we start introducing Media Education into schools, apart from those of suitable venues and adequate equipment, are problems such as time-tabling and assessment. Earlier, I stressed that flexibility was vital to the teaching of media. However, once inside the rigid school system, we will often find that we are unable to exercise the flexibility we would like.

If we are serious about Media Education, we must tackle these problems and work for viable solutions within existing structures. Time-tabling allowances will have to be negotiated to accommodate the screening of films or the additional time required for a workshop in which pupils produce their own media. Assessment I see as one of the main areas of concern. If we want Media Education to have the effects which I have outlined, then it will have to cease to be a peripheral part of the syllabus. An assessment procedure which remains true to the progressive ideals of Media Education, while at the same time meeting the requirements of education departments and, ultimately, tertiary education admission requirements, will have to be developed. Such an assessment programme would have to assess the areas such as the pupils' abilities to recognise the levels of realism employed in a media text, as well as the representative nature of the media. It would have to assess a pupil's ability to place media texts in their appropriate categories and to link these categories with interpretation of the media. Pupils would have to be assessed on their ability to imagine how and why, by whom and for what reason, for which audience and with what effect a media text is produced. Pupils would also have to display an understanding of the selective nature of the media, in terms of issues such as editing and censorship. (Bazalgette 1989, pp. 85). The problematics surrounding the field of Media Education are numerous, but these problems must become part of the discourse between teachers and pupils. The field of study must constantly be problematized, in order to keep it dynamic and flexible.

The mass media, and especially television, have been blamed for nurturing passive attitudes to reception. I feel that these attitudes were first nurtured in the school environment and have been fuelled by traditional teaching methods. If pupils are to develop a critical autonomy, which will preclude them from falling prey to the seduction of the media, then teachers working in the field of media are going to have to rethink their own perceptions and attitudes about education. In order to keep abreast of advances in media technology, they will have to dispense with the protective armour of the traditional approach to teaching and learning and become pioneers in a field of education which is still shrouded in a pall of mistrust. ■

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The Ethnography of Visual Literacy

John Van Zyl

It is important to locate this discussion of visual literacy in South Africa in 1990. The context is obvious and we are all aware of the list of statistics regarding the enormous inequalities locally in educational facilities, social opportunities, welfare and health services, as well as the basic problems of universal franchise and the items that a Bill of Rights should ensure.

The fact that there is a move towards a unitary, democratic, non-sexist and non-racist South Africa lends an urgency to matters like verbal illiteracy, as well as visual illiteracy.

As Ed French has written

> Were a history of adult literacy work in South Africa to be written ... the volume would be regrettably thin. (French 1988, pp. 26)

He goes on to discuss the problems faced in literacy work - social, economic and cultural, as well as the notoriously difficult task of defining literacy.

Given that the term 'literacy' in 'visual literacy' is problematic and that we should look for a more appropriate term, we can however, learn from verbal literacy to tread carefully when trying to teach visual literacy. The typical dictionary definition of literacy is 'the ability to read and write' but this avoids issues like: What do people need to read and write? To what ends and in whose interests? What are the minimum qualifications to be seen as literate in specific circumstances, or does literacy have a less specific meaning of being competent in a wider culture or literature?

Even the question of 'functional literacy' is fraught with problems of exploitation (like mine-workers being given a vocabulary that will enable them to perform limited functions on a mine).

French proposes a definition of literacy that is useful:

> (It) encompasses the varied skills and qualities that diverse organisations deem it necessary to help, enable, empower, make more efficient, or liberate adults who have been deprived of a useful degree of formal education. (French 1988, pp 26.)

The operative phrase is 'empower', act more freely, have greater choice, have access to previously monopolised information. But French warns that even with a more acceptable definition of literacy we must take into account the twin problems that bedevil most programmes: questions of legitimacy and authenticity. Powerful groupings and organisations try to establish their legitimacy or credentials through literacy programmes that will create a consumer middle-class or vaguely aid reform or help present a charitable facade, or even try to present a liberation programme. In all of these cases it is the agency rather than the illiterate that is of greater importance.

Authenticity, on the other hand, is brought into question because most literacy programmes are initiated and run by whites. This means that the real needs of the illiterate are often not addressed because they, being illiterate, lack a voice.

Bearing these observations in mind, we can now move towards a discussion of the problems in visual literacy.

How does an ethnographic perspective help us in reformulating the issue? If we regard visual literacy as being a social and cultural phenomenon, something that exists between people and that connects individuals to a range of experiences at different points in time, then it lends itself to ethnographic investigation.

> By ethnographic we mean descriptions that take into account the perspective of members of a social group, including the beliefs and values that underlie and organise their activities and utterances. (Smith 1990)

This means that we must move away from the simplistic formalistic taxonomy that usually passes as a discussion of visual literacy. We must focus on the social and cultural contexts and processes involved in the acquisition of visual literacy. These should include an investigation of how children interact with adults in different cultures to acquire their visual *competence*. (Let us introduce that term now, and define it later.) Adults make visual texts comprehensible to their children through personal relationships in the home by building on and developing existing communicative patterns. From conversational interaction children are introduced to media images like picture books and movies, or natural images like the distinguishing markings on the skins of cattle or patterns in beadwork or woven material.

These competencies are developed in informal social peer-interaction through hidden or secretive visual literacies like children's games. Both card and board games need a high degree of visual competences, these generally being overlooked rather than considered as aspects of visual competence.

A seminal essay in the ethnography of literacy (which has interesting implications for visual literacy) is 'The Anthropology of Literacy Acquisition'. David Smith questions the traditional assumption that illiteracy is the cause of poverty and exclusion from the good things of life, showing that many adults live a reasonably successful life while being classified functionally illiterate. A mechanic may operate quite successfully while being unable to read a manual. For him illiteracy is only an inconvenience in this workplace, although he might well be totally lost in another situation.

Analogously, the inability to recognise the genre of a film will probably not seriously affect a filmgoer's enjoyment of a movie. An immigrant may not be able to read of write English, but may be literate in his or her home language. This is a specific illiteracy that has little effect on the person's self-concept. Similarly, a person who is a movie-buff might have great trouble in interpreting a complicated Flemish still-life filled with arcane symbolism.

Or, to use a personal anecdote: when I wrote an approving review of Gideon Mendel's photographic essay of the AWB *The Last Trek* I compared a photograph of a dejected AWB member on a swayback nag to a Don Quixote without a lance who would not even recognise a windmill, or horseman who could not make the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. I was taken to task by a young Black activist who insisted merely by imaging the AWB, Mendel was lending them respectability. The activist saw flags and racism, I saw irony and allusion. I still think that I was right and that the exhibition was a devastating expose of the bondage and lack of inspiration of the AWB.

Professionally, I knew Mendel's previous work, and I was aware of August Sander's similar expose of German society. But then, of course, my interpretative response was not blocked by the sheer insult to Blacks of the existence of the AWB.

One student who is unwilling to pay the social and psychological price for the acquisition of school literacy. The boycotting of classes by Black pupils in South Africa is a case in point. The realities such pupils experience in everyday life belie the promise that literacy will lead to a better life.

Again analogously, individuals or groups can be turned off the the visual culture or another group if that group is seen as threatening, colonial of alien. Even (on a smaller scale) a schoolchild will not risk peer ridicule by appearing to be 'clever' by knowing about paintings or photographs.

Bearing these examples in mind we can see how the two requirements of ethnographic research - participant observation and the discovery of what situations means to those in them - reveal that the meaning of a situation may firstly be different to different participants, and secondly, not necessarily what it seems to be from the outside. Ethnography's committment to holism consigns a particularly important role to context in its investigations. One can therefore argue that illiteracy is not simply a single problem taking on various forms, but that it is a social issue defined by social context. That means that there can be many illiteracies (or literacies), linguistic or visual, which should not be seen primarily as a pedagogic issue, but as a relational issue.

An ethnography of linguistic or visual literacy that is true to its cultural roots will examine, without preconception, both the social consequences of the particular illiteracy under investigation as well as the various levels of meaning that individuals perceive it has for them.

Paulo Freire has argued that before one can learn to read and write the *word*, one has to learn to read and write the *world*. This will enable the individual to determine whether the price of becoming literate is worth paying. So the educator must take into account the extent to which each individual's reading of his or her world is respected as being legitimate and accurate, while recognising that no-one else can experience it.

This is where we finally take leave of linguistic literacy, having taken note of the complexities involved.

If we take Paulo Freire's statement as a point of departure then one realises that it is not wholly appropriate for visual literacy. Most people before they attempt to *interpret* the image, can already *see* the world.

There is already a basic visual competency that enables individuals to see pictures, colours, shapes, patterns whether they be on paper, canvas, screens or cowhide.

But, as Osborne puts it:

> In ordinary life we are accustomed to use our perceptions as clues to practical situations, signposts to action and the raw material of conceptualising thought. We do not notice the perceptual qualities of the things we see, beyond what is necessary to classify and place them. (Osborne 1970, pp. 21)

Looking is commonplace, seeing is rare. This explains the popular delight in naturalistic art which can be appreciated for its verisimilitude because here perception of the painting involves little more than identification or recognition. Since visual competence is not taught at school, even a child's ability to see, its natural visual and perceptual acuity, is subordinated to the word. Gradually visual images are relegated to illustrations to written texts, while all the attention is focused on explication and criticism of the written text.

Somehow the child acquires the necessary visual competence to deal with his or her immediate life, the ability to recognise advertisements in magazine, understand a movie in a cinema, realise why a photograph is in a newspaper and know that moving images on television at 8 o'clock at night convey the news.

In the same way that the peasant woman might be mathematically illiterate but still be able to cut and sew a complicated geometrical dress pattern, or the street newspaper vendor who cannot pass Standard Two maths can easily give a motorist change, people acquire a basic visual competence.

It might therefore be argued that there is no such thing as visual illiteracy, and even if there were, it would not be as serious as linguistic illiteracy.

There is some truth in this, but it in no way detracts from the importance of visual literacy.

It is commonplace that we are increasingly subjected to a world of images as global satellite television increases in scope. This means greater production of news, documentaries, images of cultures and colonisation by powerful American or Eurocentric cultural images.

Visual Competence as Empowerment *and* Visual Discourse as Communicative Competence

Larry Gross has noted that within the broad category of symbolic competence there are at least five-subcategories or modes: the linguistic, the iconic or visual, the social-gestural, the musical and the logico-mathematical. He goes on:

> The existence of competence is dependent on extensive and continual action. Skilful action in a symbolic mode is intelligence and knowledge itself, and at the same time it is the only way such knowledge can be acquired, maintained, extended and utilised in creative and productive activity. Intelligence is skill in a medium, or more precisely skill in a cultural medium. (Gross 1974, pp. 76).

Gross is underlining the active participation of the individual and is also emphasising the arena of culture within which the acquisition of symbolic competence occurs.

It is clear that, with the active participation of the individual, visual competence will increase through the process of *maturation*. This means that the barriers that hinder this process should be eliminated.

Visual competence should be presented as attractive, as desirable and as a means towards empowerment. This is not going to be easy in South Africa either for children or for adults. Whites should be persuaded that visual competence in Black art (or transitional art if you wish) is important. The rediscovery of Black art that started with the 'Neglected Tradition' Exhibition at the Johannesburg Art Gallery in 1987 and has continued with the awarding of prizes to artists like Jackson Hlungwani and Gerard Sekoto must become a significant part of art education. The move of Black art from ethnographic museums and curio shops into art galleries, where it is beginning to command high prices, is a major process of cultural recognition.

We should also not make the basic ethnographic mistake of trusting the so-called 'native informant' and assume that every Black will be able to discourse on the nature of, say, Venda sculpture. There should also be a conscious effort to teach Black children to understand and appreciate Black art. At the same time, the history of Western art and photography must be seen as essential knowledge for all, both Black and White. Let us not make the same mistake and assume that all Whites are competent in interpreting and understanding Western visual art.

The importance and significance of television must be stressed. It is both a threat and a gift to all cultures. Global satellite television will be a fact of life in South African within the next five years, posing a great threat to the cultural and intellectual possession of smaller cultures. It can both drown them or misuse them. On the other hand, community television can prove to be a gift and antidote to this imperialism and help preserve and promote indigenous cultures. Both types of television need visual competency.

There is a need for a South African film industry that can draw on the best models of Europe, America, the East and Africa as well as developing a local style and content.

The same may be said of South African photography. Luckily this is an area where Black photographers have established themselves. The name of Peter Magubane, Ernest Cole, Ben Gosani, Alf Kumalo and Omar Badsha rank with those of David Goldblatt, Paul Weinberg and Jenny Gordon. (Note the absence of Black women!)

Finally, the whole question of visual competence must be taught or encouraged within the framework of visual discourse. This means that the production as well as the distribution and visual texts must be taken into account. The little bit of formalistic explication of a film that passes for film study in schools these days if fairly worthless. Any formal study must take into account the ideological context of a visual text: Who made it, with whose money, for what purpose and who saw it? Discourse will take into account the synchronic and the diachronic meaning of a visual text. Issues pertaining to the synchronic would establish whether there are others like it and how it relates to similar texts in other media. Then diachronically, debate or enquiry could include the genesis, the tradition of the work, as well as the way the individual makes the visual text produce meaning. All of the implications of Reception Theory should be borne in mind, as well as the Theory of the Subject in the way that meaning is negotiated. The demystification of this process is a significant part of acquiring visual competence.

Only then should the text be examined formally. There should be a careful distinction drawn between the *formal* visual competencies appropriate to film, television, photography, painting and graphic art and even more specifically between the sub-categories of, say portrait photography, photojournalism, social documentation, landscape photography or art photography. The same is true of film, of painting and so on.

There are many visual 'literacies', not just one. And the end of the acquisition of visual competency is not the production of consistency of vision or even uniformity of interpretation. It is knowledge of the processes involved and awareness of the self. In Nelson Goodman's words

> The eye comes always ancient to its work obsessed by its own past and by old and new insinuations of the ear ... Not only HOW, but WHAT it sees is regulated by need and prejudice. It selects, rejects, organises, discriminates, associates, classifies, anlayses and constructs. (Goodman 1969, pp 7-8).

Knowledge of this situation, and ways of dealing with it are the first steps towards visual competency. ■

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An Overview of, & Report on, the Role of Media Studies in English Medium Secondary Schools in the Transvaal

Jane Ballot

Introduction

In Transvaal schools we do not study 'the media'. We are involved with the study of the visual media only, under a section of the English syllabus entitled 'Visual Literacy'. Most commonly, however, due to the informal way in which visual literacy is structured and the fact that a film, or parts of film, are studied, the terms become confused and teachers and pupils alike talk about 'film study'.

The history of Visual Literacy in Transvaal secondary schools is about fifteen years old. In the mid 1970s, English teachers did teach a very limited part of the visual media - as advertising. The study of English has always been verbally orientated, and so this was the study of words working with pictures to create a message. The emphasis was on the advertisements as part of the language. In keeping with this emphasis, setwork material studied at all levels of high school was comprised of print literature - poetry, plays and prose.

A comprehensive report on this course appears in Johann Grove's Master's dissertation, The Theory and Practice of Film Study at the Secondary School Level. According to Grove, the experiment was instituted as a result of the conclusion having been reached that there was a need for some form of media study at secondary schools. The fact that film study already existed as part of school curricula in the United Kingdom, North America and Australia indicated the importance of such study. (Throughout his dissertation, Grove makes no distinction between the terms 'film study', 'media study', and 'visual literacy').

Then, in 1977, an experiment was instituted at six secondary schools in the Transvaal. This was an experimental film study course, conducted from 1977-79, which laid the foundations for the eventual introduction of visual literacy into the English syllabus.

Grove also indicated that, as children are exposed to so much television, film study would help them to deal with this - and their immediate environment.

The experimental film course began with the study of the full-length film, *Zorba the Greek*, in Standards Eight, Nine and Ten. This film was found to be too long, and too advanced for school children. The Project Group had to narrow down their approach, which they did by confining film study to Standard Eight in 1977, so that they could 'find their feet'; and also to two short films (*The Lady or the Tiger* and *The Red Kite*), which aided organization and administration. In 1978 the study of film was extended into Standard Nine, and then into Standard Ten in 1979.

The methodology of the film study experiment involved an initial analysis of the 'larger, more literary issues' (Grove 1981, pp. 2), and a secondary 'more critical, technique-orientated' study (Grove 1981, pp. 6). Evaluation of the study was by means of essays or paragraphs based upon class discussions. The final Standard Ten evaluation was in the form of a film study paper as part of the six schools' internal matriculation system.

The final result of the experimental course was a recommendation by the Working Committee to the Joint Matriculation Board that film study be included in the syllabus for English First Language. Further pioneering work by Grove and the Subject

Committee for English in the Transvaal Education Department (TED), resulted in the inclusion of film study into the English curricula at all English medium secondary schools in the Transvaal. This falls under the subsection 'Visual Literacy', which is part of the Reading section of the syllabus for English First Language.

As set out in the syllabus, Visual Literacy comprises the study of visual material - pictures, cartoons, advertisements, tape-slide programmes, film and television. In the Standard Ten syllabus, in addition to the three literature setworks (a play by Shakespeare, a novel, 600 lines of poetry), there is a fourth setwork. This is a choice between a 'substantive body of work' (TED 1986a, pp20) (anthology of short stories/novel/play) and a film. The set film for 1988/9 was *Chariots of Fire*; and for 1990/1 is *Witness*.

The Intention

In the general Assumptions and Aims for the syllabus, the terms 'film', 'television', 'screen material' and 'visual literacy' are not mentioned. It is possible, though, to assume that the Assumptions and Aims apply to *all* facets of English - including Visual Literacy. This paper also assumes that 'visual literacy'/'film study' are a part of the 'language' referred to in the syllabus, the introduction to which indicates the need to foster pupils' expression of their lives and needs, through the integration of *all* language skills routed firmly in culture, community and context.

Despite the fact that the syllabus utilises generalised statements about the language, it is possible to read the Assumptions and Aims and place film study/visual literacy in where it is intended to be. Most obviously, as visual literacy is part of the Reading section of the syllabus, it must fit in where the reading skills do.

The Assumptions upon which the English syllabus is based refer to the 'questions of value....implicit in all language experience' (TED 1986a, pp. 1). Film and television may be regarded as an expression of the pupils' lives in terms of what they choose to view. Thus the incorporation of the study of the visual media into a language is a means by which discernment and critical awareness may be taught - and the pupils will learn about values and how to assess situations. The syllabus indicates the importance of integrating the receptive and expressive language skills. This indicates that pupils are to be encouraged not to just view films passively, but to speak and write about them too.

In the Assumptions, the importance of a study of language rooted in the pupils' personal experience is emphasized. As has been established by various sources, a great amount of a pupil's experience is vicarious, via the media - particularly television. Thus the inclusion of the visual media into the syllabus should satisfy the demand for a language study that takes into account the pupils' experience. This is often belied by the real situation, however, particularly in the choice of setwork material. Here, there is no reflection of the pupils' social environment. Films such as *Chariots of Fire* and *Witness* depict unfamiliar communities and nationalities that are not really part of a teenager's world. The choice of such films does, however, satisfy another Assumption that points out that

> language reflects communities, cultures and nationalities which deserve full acknowledgement and respect (TED 1986a, pp.1).

Further, an assumption is made that language study best occurs in 'an atmosphere of free and open enquiry' (TED 1986a, pp. 2). As the system of education itself belies this ideal, perhaps setwork films have been chosen that deal with 'safe' issues. And they are films that can be discussed at a distance.

There is a clear indication in the Assumptions that language teaching should relate to the pupils' needs. One strongly perceived need of pupils is the necessity to be instructed in the media. In the TED syllabus, however, there is no approach towards a general awareness of the media and their power. The need is apparently satisfied by the fostering of critical awareness in the pupils so that they can make reasoned choices when selecting material to view.

Although the syllabus mentions that most learning across the curriculum takes place through language, there is not a strong indication that film (as part of this language) should move out of the confines of English and be stressed as a universal learning medium - effectively enabling information to be depicted clearly and to be kept for many years. The value of the screen as a learning medium has, in fact, been recognised by many schools who have utilised educational films, slides and videos in other subjects for many years. The Assumptions also state the necessity for schools to develop an across- the-curriculum language policy. With the confinement of Visual Literacy to the English syllabus merely as an alternative source for literature study, there is little - if any - indication of this occurring with the visual media.

There is one general Aim for teaching English: 'to help pupils to develop their potential as individuals and as members of society through developing their competence and performance in using language and through enriching their experience and enjoyment of language.'(TED 1986, pp. 2) In terms of the previous Assumptions, 'language' refers to English as a means of communication through writing, speaking, listening and reading - a part of which is Visual Literacy. And the visual media become used as texts to be 'read'/interpreted in the study of the language. Were the pupils to become involved in any image production, this could be regarded as an extension of the expressive skills (writing and speaking) of the language. The aim to enrich the pupils' experience and enjoyment of part of the language is fulfilled by the fostering of discernment in the choice of viewing material in pupils.

Following the general aim, there are five explanatory aims for the teacher. The first three are expressed as noble aims to promote the child's development, enhance their dignity and sustain confidence in themselves in order that they may understand themselves and live more fully.

The study of the visual media is valuable in helping teachers to achieve these aims. Most teenagers are far more visually literate than print-literate, and therefore it is often easier to encourage pupils to respond to visual material than to print. This also provides a way to 'reach' children who are visually orientated. Further, those pupils who are not as verbally literate as others are often able to achieve in the study of visual texts and are therefore able to retain their dignity and to sustain confidence in themselves.

The fourth of these explanatory aims is to 'promote the pupils' ability to use language as a means of communication' (TED 1986a, pp. 3). Very little chance is given to pupils to become involved in video/film production and thus truly to use the visual media to communicate. One of the reasons for this absence of active production is a practical one - it is very difficult to allow twenty-five to thirty children to produce, for example, a video in a thirty-to-fifty minute period.

Without overworking the interpretation, however, it is possible to regard pupils' viewing habits, responses to setwork visual material and comments about television as being a channel via which they commnunicate. One may infer a lot about what a child feels and/or wishes to express through such responses. Thus, if not in a truly productive sense, the pupils can use the visual aspect of English to communicate.

The final aim is for the pupils 'to extend their ability to observe, to discriminate and to order their thoughts coherently' (TED 1986a, pp. 3). This aim for the whole of English is borne out by the TED's approach to teaching visual literacy. In the explanation of the Reading section of the syllabus, it is stated that work on visual material 'should always be aimed at encouraging pupils to develop a critical and discerning attitude to film and television' (TED 1986a, pp. 19). Thus, through visual literacy, the pupils are extending their abilities to discriminate.

There is no statement of the inclusion of visual material in the introduction to, and aims of, the Reading section of the syllabus. All the points that are made refer to reading skills and reading material, not viewing and visual sources. Visual literacy does form a part of this section, though, and so it is possible to apply a broader understanding of the term 'reading'. This includes the interpretation of visual texts as forming part of the practice of analysis, or reading. An indication of the appropriateness of such an extension of the term 'reading' is a statement of the need to extend pupils in all aspects of reading. And, part of the Subject Content is a statement that the pupils should be introduced to visual literacy as an extension of the reading technique. Thus it becomes clearer why visual literacy has become part of Reading - and how to begin to approach teaching this section.

It is in the Aims of the Reading section that one finds even clearer indications as to where visual literacy fits into the syllabus. The first aim is for pupils to 'develop good reading habits and a love of reading' (TED 1986a, pp. 19). This, together with the second aim - 'to develop discrimination in the choice of reading material'(TED 1986a, pp. 19) - place further emphasis upon, and explain, the focus in visual literacy on fostering critical attitudes to films and television.

The third aim provides the most motivation discovered thus far for the inclusion of visual literacy into the Reading section. Here teachers should aim to help the pupils to become aware of the 'range and power of language' (TED 1986a, pp. 20) - and, of course, part of the range of English is its visual component.

In the senior syllabus, the aims express the desire for the pupils to develop their awareness and understanding of themselves, others and society. This can be achieved through the study of the visual media, particularly as films and, especially, television, do claim to reflect the world around them. One of these aims indicates that the pupils should 'develop an understanding and appreciation of their literary and cultural heritage'(TED 1986a, pp. 18) - and so the study of some South African literature. The absence of South African films/video programmes from amongst setworks and also from amongst material available from the TED must be noted, however.

The first time that any visual media are mentioned as sources for study is in the list of Reading Resources in the syllabus for Standards Five to Seven. This list comprises five subheadings (Print, Sound, Stage, Screen, Prose), with explanatory examples. The subheading, 'Screen', refers to television programmes, news, films, advertisements. This strongly suggests that the intention is for pupils to 'read' visual material as well as printed matter. There is also a statement that 'reading and viewing are part of a continuum' (TED 1986b, pp. 21), once again linking the two processes together.

In the syllabus for Standards Eight to Ten, no list of reading resources is given. There is, however, a fairly clear statement of the proposed role of visual literacy. The first statement is that 'Screened material should be studied in its own right' (TED 1986a, pp. 19). This and the subsequent explanation clearly indicate that films and other visual material should be studied separately. The emphasis of visual literacy teaching, it is clearly indicated by these aims, must be on increasing the pupils' understanding and appreciation of the visual media.

The Subject Content of the syllabus is useful in assessing what it is that is to be studied, but is not very useful as a clear guide to an approach to the media. The syllabus calls for the study of various types of screen material - as well as various elements of the visual media. One may assume, from the itemization of what to teach, that the intention is to study films as products as well as what makes up the products. There is a no order indication as to which elements should be studied in which standards as well as an obvious lack of developmental structure of the section.

Thus the practice of teaching visual literacy is almost forced to occupy a minor role in the process of teaching English - and to be structured and developed by teachers themselves.

The Present Situation

During the period 11 January to 3 April 1990, I conducted a programme of research at English medium secondary schools in the Transvaal. This comprised a series of questionnaires which were completed by the Heads of the English departments at a representative sample of the schools. The results of these questionnaires revealed how Visual Literacy is being studied in schools.

The vast majority of English medium secondary schools in the Transvaal study visual literacy. This is generally a study of film and/or television programmes as part of English from Standard Six to Ten. The major reasons for the schools having begun to study the visual media are: that visual literacy was introduced as part of the syllabus; to teach discernment in viewing; because film and television are interesting and challenging; and in order to prepare pupils for future trends in teaching. This latter reason does not appear to be particularly important among the other reasons, but it could become increasingly more vital as television in South Africa moves into education. The eventuality of this is imminent, as reported by the South African Broadcasting Corporation recently. The corporation has announced its intention to broadcast educational programmes during the morning for the use of schoolteachers from as early as 1991.

The methods of teaching visual literacy in the schools vary. The most common are to use screen material as the source for written and oral work; and to study a film as a setwork. Films and television programmes are also used to introduce/illustrate concepts in English; and as a contrast or in parallel to written setworks. It was noted, in particular, that the study of visual material has served to develop ideas of bias and propaganda, denotation and connotation, style, tone and intention - not only in English, but in other subjects too.

There is a remarkable degree of overlap in the screen material and elements of visual media actually studied at the schools.

All the schools included the language of film early on in their film study courses. The 'language' taught was essentially a meta-language - useful terms and jargon used to talk about the new medium. Most schools regarded the knowledge of the 'correct' terminology essential in order that the pupils could speak knowledgeably about film and television. Some schools indicated that this was a necessary part of the complete study of the visual media. Most schools also teach the process of film production - what goes into a film to make it work, in order to study all aspects of film properly. Generally, schools study the process of film production in Standards Six to Eight/Nine, and then this knowledge is applied in the study of a film in Standard Ten. Thus the product is being studied via an analysis of the elements making up the process. In several schools, film is contextualised by studying its history; and also genre - the study of which is mainly linked to genre in literature.

Setwork screen material in the schools comprises various films and television programmes. The films vary in length and genre, and are mainly obtained through TED sources. Television material includes situation comedies and advertisements. The greatest variety of titles is studied in Standard Eight, and the least in Standard Ten, where most schools study only the setwork film. There are exceptions, however, and these schools study films in conjunction with the books, or informative television series on visual media. There is an indication that the presence of a setwork film in Standard Ten influences the way in which schools approach Visual Literacy - studying a separate film in each standard. There is a strong concentration on film as film; and schools wish to establish film study more in the junior standards in order to prepare the pupils for the matric examination. It is important to note here that the visual literacy study in the junior standards tends to focus on the elements of film and the process of film production. As pupils and teachers have become more familiar with the visual media, there has been a broadening of the amount of visual material studied, and also the depth in which the products are analysed.

The questionnaires requested that the teachers provide the aims for teaching film/visual literacy that they had devised for their individual schools. These aims provide interesting insight into how teachers regard the role of visual literacy in secondary schools.

The overall most important aim is to enable pupils to interpret the visual media and to alert them to the manipulative powers of these media. It is only the second most common aim to guide the pupils to develop critical awareness of the visual media. The third most common aim is to develop the pupils' ability to express themselves knowledgeably about the visual media. Fourth is to develop an awareness of film as art; and fifth is to reach the visually-orientated child. The least most common aim is to prepare pupils for the matric examination.

Intention vs Practice

There are areas in which the intention and the practice of teaching visual literacy differ. One of the overall impressions left by the Assumptions and Aims of the syllabus is that of a need to practise a study of language that integrates the expressive and the receptive skills. This study should be firmly rooted in the pupils' experience.

If one considers closely the notion of pupils' experience, we find that it can be divided into two broad areas. One part of the experience of teenagers is that of the family, school and friends. Here the child is generally involved with institutions and related issues that arise, not only in our social context, but in others too. Then, to study set screen material that reflects issues such as peer-group pressure, divorce and how to cope with it or drug and alcohol abuse, is a manner in which education deals with the pupils' experience and also teaches to the perceived needs of pupils - which is another aim of the English syllabus.

Then there is the second broad area of the pupils' experience, that of their socio-political environment. Great influence on teenagers is exerted by family, school and peers and issues such as drug abuse are universal. But the family, school and peer group all operate within a specific socio-political environment that exerts an influence on them and, therefore, on individual teenagers too And it is this part of their experience that is not adequately covered in visual literacy. Films and television programmes tend to reflect, to a certain extent, at least some part of an environment. And the study of such screen material would be rooted in the pupils' experience.

According to Criticos, the practice and content of media studies 'should be indigenous to local context and interests'. (1988, pp. 5). The choice of screen material actually studied in schools - and especially the matric setwork films - belies this aim. The matric films *Chariots of Fire* and Witness are set in the United Kingdom and the United States of America respectively. Neither film deals with characters, situations or events typical of a present day South African context. The majority of other screen material available - and recommended for study - follows this principle too.

It may be argued that these films deal with issues that are universal and therefore valid study material. The study of such universal issues depicted in a foreign context and by events unfamiliar to the average South African child, is not rooting study of the language in the pupils' experience. It may be that there are not many South African films considered suitable for study; there may also be a lack of shorter South African films that are more easily-managed in the short class time; yet there are some films that deal with benign (non-political) issues, yet whose depicted world is South African - and therefore part of the pupils' experience. And then there is television - dramas and series that are rooted in a South African experience, as well as documentaries, news etc. However, visual literacy in the Transvaal is essentially film study. We need to move away from this and, instead of studying films on a television screen, to marry the two media in order to truly study visual literacy. And then setwork material could be television programmes that are South African.

The English syllabus clearly states that screen material is not to be considered as subordinate to literature, but is to be studied as a separate entity. This approach is supported by the structuring of visual literacy for Standard Ten. Here, a film is present in the syllabus content as a separate setwork. The pupils do not study the film of a book, but an individual film.

It is in the manner in which these setwork films are to be studied that one finds a discrepancy between syllabus and practice. In study guides and notes suggesting how to tackle setwork films, there is a fair amount of emphasis placed upon the more traditional 'literary' aspects, such as plot, character or themes. This is essentially a product-orientated approach. There are indications that the filmic aspects should be studied, but this is added almost as an afterthought.

There is a degree of ambiguity in the ways in which teachers approach visual literacy. In the matric year, the set film is generally studied as a product - and a separate entity. In Standards Six to Nine, however, a number of schools indicated that they studied films of set books. One school studied a book and the film of it in Standard Ten. Schools also used screen material to introduce or illustrate concepts in English, such as theme and setting. Film is also used as source material for written or oral work.

A number of schools do approach screen material as a separate entity. This is noticeable in some of the methods of teaching film: studying the language of film through photographs; teaching film study in, say, a three week block; and building up the study of the visual media as distinct from the print media.

The Future

Although several schools do regard screen material as a separate entity, the overall approach to visual literacy would appear to be to integrate it into the overall study of English. This is most likely the result of the product-orientated approach to film utilised by the TED Were there to be a greater focus on the process of the visual media and how they work - thus emphasizing their relevance as a separate discipline - perhaps teachers would begin to remove the visual media to a certain extent from the rest of English and study screen material as a separate entity. Thus visual literacy would be developed as part of, but not subordinate to, the subject English.

A more process-orientated study of the visual media would also point the children more carefully towards how films and television work, and therefore to the effects that they may have on a viewer. The importance of this sort of analysis has been identified by teachers. The overall most common aim of teaching visual literacy/film study supplied by teachers themselves is to enable children to be able to deal with the media through becoming aware of manipulation by the media.

We live in a social context that is fast becoming even more media-orientated than it already is. Children no longer go out to play in the afternoons, they rather spend an hour or more watching television. Teenagers tend to spend more time watching videos at parties than socialising.

Numbers of studies have been done on the effect of television on children. A large part of the justification for the introduction of visual literacy into the school curriculum is the great amount of time for which teenagers are exposed to the visual media. And yet, the syllabus makes absolutely no mention of the fact that the media do manipulate viewers, or the need for pupils to become aware of this manipulation.

The visual medium that manipulates perhaps most easily and most rapidly is television, yet the emphasis in Transvaal schools is on film study. The English syllabus does not call for the study of film to the exclusion of the other visual media. In fact, as has been noted, the syllabus requires a study of what is termed 'screen material', of which film is only a part. The stress placed upon a single film as a setwork in matric and the generally product-orientated approach to visual literacy studies have, however, tended to place a greater emphasis on the study of film over the other visual media. Teenagers are exposed to many more hours of television than of film. It emerges, therefore, that there is a need for the focus of visual literacy studies in the Transvaal to move away from film and towards television

One of the prime functions of television is to operate as a state apparatus and to communicate the dominant ideology. This communication is, naturally, not obvious and is not done with general announcement of intent. The message is hidden and the control exerted by the medium insidious. The way in which this is achieved is through manipulating the processes of the media so the product communicates a specific - hidden - message. And pupils need to become aware of - and learn how to deal with - this manipulation.

Conclusion

Teachers at secondary schools in the Transvaal do not call for an increased study of television as opposed to film. There is a need, however, for Transvaal secondary schools to begin to root the study of film in a more general study of the media. This would enable the curriculum to expand to include a more extensive study of all the visual media,and particularly television; and would move the pupils into learning to deal with all the media operating within their social environment. Media study of this nature would have to be firmly rooted in the pupils' experience in order to truly enable them to develop the abilities to deal with all facets of the media and their environment competently.

Although they do not deal with the issue of a broader media (as opposed to visual media/film) study, the way to more effective media study in Transvaal secondary schools is being indicated by English teachers themselves.

Their concern at this time with the manipulative powers of the visual media, and their practice of teaching the elements and process of producing screen material, indicate an awareness that a product-orientated study of one type of visual medium is not an adequate analysis. And it is not enough to simply aim at developing the child's critical awareness and responses to the media. There is a need for the child to discover how these media work. ■

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Part III

Working Out How Media Works

Because media are used so frequently and with so little effort usually, and because everyone has ideas about the popular media forms they enjoy, there is often a sense that theory is unnecessary. It is exactly because media forms have become so naturalized that we need to attend to the theory to draw out how in fact media do work. To return to the definition quoted earlier, specific aspects therein cannot simply be dealt with in common-sensical ways:

> the way media work, how they produce meanings, how they are organized and how audiences make sense of them.

An awareness of theoretical understandings becomes an intrinsic aspect of Media Education as it does with any other field of study.

To start with, Ferguson's comprehensive and concise outline maps out this vast and complex terrain in an accessible manner. Ferguson stresses the central importance of theory. He attends in particular to those theoretical debates relating to language, to audience and to ideology. Insights into these three areas develop an awareness of the role of power and pleasure, the remaining two elements in his definition of Media Education. Considerations of power and pleasure invoke both ideas of audience, readings, organizations, institutions and society's discourses. What is thus mapped is an intricate and interlinked field of enquiry wherein key concepts can be identified and even concentrated upon, but that never really can be dealt with in isolation from all the other facets of Media Education.

Like any other discipline, theoretical rigour is essential to create a coherent body of work that deals both with understandings and methodology in the field. Ferguson suggests that it is the responsibility of Media Educators

> to make theoretical understanding, and the potential for theoretical development, accessible to students at all levels of education.

With understanding of things theoretical, this interlinked and coherent field of study emerges. What we have emphasized is the central realization that media representations are cultural issues. Certain cultural discourses are picked up when individual contributors examine particular texts with this understanding and offer readings of these cultural products. Chapman offers a particular deconstructive approach to the film, *Running on Empty*, simultaneously disputing the place of studying film in South African schools in its present educational position. (Higgins reacts against this position in his chapter.) Johnston addresses certain cultural representatives, those apparent in recent films, not made locally, but that focus on South African themes. He contextualizes an interest in South Africa as a setting and a subject for the three films he deals with in relation to the agendas of the (foreign) filmmakers. His understanding of these cultural products is developed from his deconstructive approach and identification of elements such as a similarity in both plot and the narrative medium, which employs the family as a central theme.

Hookham uses the Australian film, *Newsfront*, to explain certain aspects of film technology, working from the premise that the 'meaning of a film and its technique are integrally related.' This outline also enables the development of particular deconstructive media work.

The Necessity of Theory in Media Education

Bob Ferguson

Media Education is an intensely practical activity in which, when it is successful, a great deal of both teaching and learning take place. For the enthusiasts who first took up teaching about the media in the post-war years, much of the impetus for working came from a love of the medium (if they happened to be film buffs for instance), or disdain or hostility if they were of the persuasion that the mass media were leading everyone (barring themselves) down the road to barbarism. Either way, there is little evidence to suggest that theory was an issue on the top of the agenda for such educationalists. In the near half century which has seen an interest in studying the media grow in many parts of the world, there has been, particularly with regard to general education, a distinct lack of enthusiasm for matters theoretical. There was, however, a brief period in the seventies and eighties when theory was debated vigorously by a small minority of those who were interested in the media. This intense debate had a great influence upon the development of Media Education, but it was never, in England, a burning issue for most teachers. It was, rather, a scholastic issue for the tiny minority who had the wit and the time to enter the debate. The espousal of attempts and Grand Theory in relation to Media Education was also, perhaps, a way of exerting a mild form of intellectual terrorism over the ignorant masses of educators. By the end of the eighties there was a strong sense of rejection of matters theoretical by many media educators. Indeed a new set of pseudo-theorists came along whose business was to deny theory at all costs and to look instead towards the disintegration of theory (and back at the disintegration of many societies or social formations) and make it a new and intense focal point for developing Media Education.

What I have just outlined is, of course, a caricature of what actually happened, but I have set it out in this polemical manner for a specific reason. I wish to argue in this paper for the central importance of theory to the development of Media Education. I wish, further to add several caveats about the ways in which we might consider approaches to theory and the media at all levels of education. I also wish to argue that theory is important in the media education of young children and in the media education of adults. It is not something to be confined to the classes of those who expect to become academic types. Nor is it something which remains a jealously guarded possession of the educator. Theory in relation to Media Education is something which needs to inform the practice of teachers, but also to be at the disposal or espousal of all students. It is not a mystery to be guarded by the high priests of Media Education. It is a practical necessity if Media Education is to fulfil its potential as a subject which engages in open and free critical enquiry, and which seeks practical applications for all its findings. This is equally valid for aspects of theory dealing with aesthetic matters, with political and economic matters, and with ideological issues. In a nutshell, theory is a necessity if Media Education is not to ossify, to die on its feet, to lose its cutting edge.

All this is by way of introduction. What I now wish to address is just what we might mean by theory and what might be its importance - I would argue necessity - for the development of Media Education in South Africa. I have been studiously avoiding the old adage that there is nothing so practical as a good theory because that is not the core of the case I wish to present. What I do wish to argue is that we all - teachers, students and researchers - make use of explicit or implicit theoretical positions in our work and daily life. And further, that it is the responsibility of Media Educators to make theoretical understanding, and the potential for theoretical development, accessible to students at all levels of education. In order to do so I will be referring to selected points of development in Media Education and touching upon what I consider to be some of the more interesting or contentious theoretical issues with which Media Educators have to engage. My arguments will focus on the secondary level of education, but I believe that they have a validity in relation to all levels of the educational spectrum. These arguments will not, of course be prescriptive. I realise that they are open to much discussion and debate. It is my hope and intention to generate such debate.

The *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary* describes a theory as 'an explanation of system of anything', and that seems as good a place as any to begin. If we are to teach about the media we will need to do some explaining.

I will discuss three areas relating to Media Education where theory is of central importance. They are not supposed to be exclusive of or all-inclusive, but I think they will provide sufficient material for the development of my argument. I will not, indeed could not, do justice to the complexity of thought and research which these areas have generated. My concern is to argue for the necessity of theory in relation to teaching about the media. The three areas are: the media and language; the media and audience and the media and ideology.

The Media and Language

A non-theorised approach to language and the media is one which teaches students about the codes of representation and signification as though these codes were natural or eternal. This type of approach tells students what a close-up 'means' in film, or what a low angle shot 'means'. Or to take another example, it tells students how they can make a video 'properly', or how to write a 'good' editorial. Now I am not suggesting that there is not merit in such an approach. For it is important to know the codes and conventions through which the media make their meaning. But it is equally important, from the point of view of a media educationalist, that students should question the conventions and codes which are in common use. Another result which often follows from a non-theorised approach to teaching media language is that both the interpretation of decoding, and the production of media messages becomes a constrained and mechanical affair. At its worst it means that students learn a set of rules which have to be applied uncritically in the production and analysis of media messages.

Attempts to teach the 'language' of a medium as though it was something to be learned by rote will have only a limited value. They can lead to the production of students who are likely to be conventional rather than innovative in their thinking as well as in their production of media messages. But if there is a need to theorise about the different ways in which specific media construct their messages, there is also a need to theorise about the use of spoken and written language within particular media. The former is the concern of semiotics and the latter leads us into a consideration of language and discourse.

Semiotics

The work of Roland Barthes has had a considerable influence upon the development of Media Education, particularly his work entitled *Mythologies* (Barthes 1972). This short work contains numerous brief and lucid essays which deal with subjects as diverse as the face of Garbo and wrestling on television, but it is at its most useful in the final essay entitled "Myth Today". Here Barthes describes the ways in which language can be used to connote at the level of myth. For Barthes, myth is another word for ideology. What does he mean by this? Well there is not time to go into this in detail here, but I will offer, stripped as much as possible of specialist language, one much-quoted example for those of you who have not come across it.

Barthes was sitting in a barber's shop when he found himself looking at the front cover of the journal *Paris Match* (he was in France and French!). On the cover there was a young black man in French uniform saluting, his eyes uplifted. Presumably he was saluting the French flag. On one level it is simply a picture of a black man giving the French salute. This is its meaning. But the form of this picture, according to Barthes is something different. From that form we can obtain a further message. Barthes says he has no trouble in making sense of this image. It has to mean that France is a great Empire, and to quote him 'that all her sons, without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag, and that there is no better answer to the detractors of an alleged colonialism than the zeal shown by this Negro in serving his so-called oppressors.'

And if one is to go along with this second level of meaning - concerning the Empire and France's greatness, certain things have to be suppressed. These include the history of the saluting figure. For although the image is of a person with some presence, it is somehow disarmed by the concept which comes with the image and which Barthes characterises as 'fully armed'. And that is the concept of French imperiality. We are not encouraged to think of how France happened to be in Africa or what kind of family this soldier comes from. Nor are we encouraged to relate this saluting figure to a past which includes slavery and despoliation.

Now I know that I have not done much justice to the sophistication of Barthes'analysis, but the point I am trying to get at is that through his analysis, based upon a theory of signification, Barthes is able to articulate the way in which myth operates. It is a small example, but one which is still very pertinent. And it is important for the Media Educator because it allows him or her to find ways of articulating how meaning is being offered at a complex level in an everyday representation. Media Educators would do well to return to a study of Barthes as a way of developing their own forms of media teaching.

And the importance of devising theories of interpretation is that they can be tested out against numerous examples. They can be modified or rejected. They can be put to use by students of the media. Without the theory, one is reduced to offering opinions about what an image might mean, rather than making judgements based upon an established set of terms for debate. This is of crucial importance in the development of Media education.

Discourse

I want to say a word now about the importance of the concept of discourse in relation to the media and language. Discourse is a strange and elusive term, but I do not think that that should deter the Media Educator or his or her students from entering into an investigation of its usefulness. It is probably easier to define what a discourse does rather than define what it is. Gunter Kress has given a succinct and helpful definition which I will quote to you:

> A discourse organises and gives structure to the manner in which a topic, object or process is talked about. (Kress 1989).

There are discourses about what it means to be a 'good citizen', or a 'real patriot' or a 'good Englishman'. These discourses will often find their way into the mass media and this can happen in at least two different ways. One is when a particular discourse is stated openly, and this is more likely to happen in times of crisis. The crisis may be political in the sense that it has to do, for instance, with developments within or between nations, or it may be narrative and dramatic, in that it is stated as part of an adventure film. A classic example of the open stating of discourse - with a little rhetoric added for good measure - would be the wartime speeches of Winston Churchill to the British people. As an example of the stating of dramatic discourse in an open way I would cite the musical *Annie Get Your Gun*. For those of you who are not familiar with the musical, it is a highly fictionalised account of the life of Annie Oakley. She was a very good shot with a rifle - better in fact than the man she wanted to marry. So when she found herself involved in a shooting competition with him, she deliberately lost to him. She then sang a song entitled 'You can't get a man with a gun', the general gist of which was that if you want to get your man, then you better let him be better at 'manly' activities than you are!

But if what I have just suggested is an example of explicit discourse, then what one finds just as often in the media are examples of implicit discourse. Without drawing this out too far at the moment, the implicit discourse in 'You can't get a man with a gun' is interesting I think. It is something to do with women wanting to get their man at all costs - even if it means denying their own skills or dropping their own principles.

Now the purpose behind my giving these rather brief examples, I would remind you once again, is to suggest that it is important to attempt to theorise language use in relation to the media. And it is important to devise strategies for the analysis of media texts which will allow you and your students to test out the possible validity of the theories on which you are working.

I want to turn now to the second area relating to Media Education where the concept of theory is important.

The Media and Audience

Theories of the audience have undergone various mutations since the beginning of research into the mass media. Such theories are very often linked to what has become known as the 'Effects' tradition in media research. There was a time when the audience was theorised as one undifferentiated mass. Something at which you aimed your messages and you either hit your target or you didn't. But in the last ten years or so there has been a quite radical shift in the way theories of the audience and research into audience perceptions have been undertaken. It is impossible to make sense of work on the media audience without engaging with some of these theoretical positions. In this paper it will be possible to mention three examples, relating only to television. Once again it is with the aim of demonstrating the significance of theoretical perspectives for the media educator.

Before considering each of these publications individually and briefly, I wish to provide a schematic outline of what might be described as the main trends across the spectrum of audience research at the moment:

1. There is a general move away from the older research methods which were based upon hypotheses concerned with the 'bad' effects of television. (Postman and Lodziak are the possible exceptions here.)

2. There is a general realisation that we need a great deal more audience research. This is coupled with two key notions: (a) There is not one homogeneous audience for television, but *audiences;* (b) people use; television. They do not merely watch it.

3. Research work on audiences is now concentrating more on the complex ways in which small groups of viewers make sense of particular television texts.

4. Some researchers are considering television and its effects as though all the arguments of the Frankfurt School, Marx on alienation, or simply twentieth century 'angst' did not exist.

5. Crude behavioural approaches to the effects of television have been discarded.

6. There has been a swing away from the theoretical engagements with the concept of ideology. This registers itself in an insistence that the audience is out there doing its own thing - using television for its own multiple purposes. And most essentially - not being duped.

If the points outlined above have any validity, they must suggest that theoretical conceptions of the audience are an essential aspect of Media Education. What will, I am sure, become apparent, is that the different theoretical conceptions of the audience which various researchers put to work for them do not sit happily alongside each other! There is a disagreement which is sometimes fundamental, and it relates to the theoretical positioning of the researchers.

Family Television - David Morley

Morley is concerned to examine the changing patterns of television viewing in the 'overall context of family leisure activity.' He rightly emphasises that television is a *domestic* medium.

> This research project was also designed to investigate the increasingly varied uses to which television can now be put. We are now in a situation where people can 'do' a number of things with their television set besides watching broadcasting television. (Morley 1986)

Without attempting to go into detail, it is quite clear that Morley has a conception, or theory if you like, of the audience as active. He also stresses that the usage of television has to be set in the context of other activities in the home and outside it. Morley seems to make a positive virtue out of the therapeutic uses to which television can be put. He suggests that the viewer can and does give attention to *more* than what is on the screen. This is not, of course, the same relationship with television as the potential viewer for an Open University course might have - one assumes.

I want to leave Morley now and turn briefly to Postman and his book *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. (Postman 1986) This is a book with a broader and more ambitious project than that of Morley. Postman was responsible for the publication of certain progressive educational texts in the United States of America in the 1960s.

And Postman is worried about television. He argues that television has managed to link teaching and learning with amusement. Television is, for him, 'a curriculum'.

> As I understand the word, a curriculum, is a specially constructed information system whose purpose is to influence, teach, train or cultivate the mind and character of youth. Television, of course, does exactly that, and does it relentlessly. In so doing, it competes successfully with the school curriculum. By which I mean, it damn near obliterates it.

He then identifies what he calls the three commandments that form the philosophy of education that television offers:

> **1.** Thou shalt have no prerequisites. [Every television programme must be complete in itself. Abolish the possibility that learning might be hierarchical etc ...]
>
> **2.** Thou shalt induce no perplexity. [This means that there must be nothing that has to be remembered, studied, applied or, worst of all, endured. It is assumed that any information, story or idea can be made immediately accessible, since the contentment, not the growth, of the learner is paramount.]
>
> **3.** Thou shalt avoid exposition like the ten plagues visited upon Egypt. [Of all the enemies of television-teaching, including continuity and perplexity, none is more formidable than exposition. Arguments, hypotheses, discussion, reasons, refutations or any of the traditional instruments of reasoned discourse turn television into radio or, worse, third-rate printed matter. Thus, television teaching always takes the form of story-telling, conducted through dynamic images and supported by music .... Nothing will be taught on television that cannot be both visualised and placed in a theatrical context. The name we may properly give to an education without pre-requisited, perplexity and exposition is entertainment.]

I have allowed myself to quote a little more of Postman because his work is controversial, his theoretical position challenging, and his books are a potential source of some lively media education sessions. His conception of the audience - in this case children - is one where they are the ghosts at the feast. He writes about them rather than researching with them. This does not, however, necessarily invalidate his arguments. I should perhaps point out that the examples I have chosen here are not chosen because I agree with them. They are, however, valid and interesting for the media educator.

I want to turn now to my last example in relation to the media and the audience. It is a book written by a lecturer in social theory. This is Lodziak's *The Power of Television*. (Lodziak 1986) I would recommend all who could to read this work. There is no time now to do more than mention one or two examples of the points which it argues. I consider it to be of fundamental importance because it shifts a great deal of the ground of debate about the influence of television on the audience. It does not deny the various approaches to one or other 'effect' of TV. What it does do is to stress the importance of TV in relation to the rest of the pattern of everyday life.

In this sense television can be seen as a medium which allows one to recover from or prepare for work (if one has a job!):

> In this context television viewing ministers to the needs which have been generated by the realm of necessity. Television invades lives already weary from work and understandably already inclined towards effortless leisure. In this sense, television becomes an extension of the economic system which has created the needs which viewing 'satisfies'. Leisure-time, instead of being used to meet 'vital needs' necessary for the development of autonomy, becomes the arena in which individuals settle for the instantaneous, insubstantial pleasure served up by the culture industry. (Lodziak 1986)

One of the most telling observations which is made by Lodziak is that television helps to maintain social fragmentation. His conception of the television audience is one of a private, perhaps lonely and certainly disjointed or fragmented set of small groups of viewers. It is clear, however, that Lodziak's theoretical perspective in relation to the audience is far from that of Postman. This is the crucial point for my argument.

I will turn now to the third of the areas I mentioned at the beginning of the paper.

Media and Ideology

This is for me one of the most fascinating and complex areas for theoretical investigation in relation to Media Education. It should be noted, however, that part of the reason for the importance of the concept of ideology is the debate which can be had about what the concept means. Is ideology something which has a meaning in an etymological sense, or is it something about which you have to have a theory? How do theories of ideology relate to common sense understandings of the term?

Common sense definitions of ideology are not of much help when approaching Media Education. What I mean by these are those types of definition which consider ideology to be something that your enemy suffers from. Or those definitions which use ideology as a synonym for propaganda.

Instead, Media Education requires us to engage with a more complex and productive set of theoretical debates - which have, I would argue, very practical consequences. For the concept of ideology has been and continues to be an intellectual battlefield on which various positions are taken up and defended. These range from the argument that there is no such thing as ideology and never has been, to arguments about the vice-like grip in which ideology holds all members of a social formation. Ideology has also been conceptualised as a process which is lived through in daily life, and a process which has very material aspects and consequences. In a particularly telling example, the French philosopher Althusser once suggested that the ideological formation of an individual is being determined before he or she is born. This process involves choices of possible name types and colour of clothing, and career aspirations from the parents. The opposite would also be the case - where ideological formation stems from parents without hope for change or betterment in their condition.

Debates about ideology have also raised very specific issues in relation to the mass media. There have been researchers and theorists who have set out to prove that the audience is a malleable and helpless mass to be moulded into any shape, form or opinion by the media moguls.

There have been others who have argued for the existence of something called 'false consciousness' - an ideological disease which, by definition, is suffered from by others.

And there have been important pedagogical consequences when educationalists have adopted particular positions on ideology. If, for instance, school students are suffering from false consciousness - meaning that they don't know what you know - then as a teacher you may be required to 'demystify' ideological messages. By lifting the ideological veil you may offer hidden truths about the mass media to those whom you teach. You become a kind of magician.

There are also very sophisticated theories of ideology associated with such thinkers as Antonio Gramsci (Gramsci 1971) and Stuart Hall (Hall 1977, 1982, 1988). For an excellent introduction to debates about ideology I would recommend David McLellan's short book entitled simply *Ideology* (McLellan 1986). Another somewhat more sophisticated approach to the issue of ideology can be found in John B Thompson's *Studies in Theory of Ideology* (Thompson 1984). Thompson is particularly interested in the ways in which ideology is related to language and signification. He writes:

> ... to study ideology is to investigate, not a particular type of discourse linked to a particular type of society, but rather the ways in which meaning (signification) serves to sustain relations of domination. The study of ideology is fundamentally concerned with language, for it is largely within language that meaning is mobilised in the defence of domination. (Thompson 1984)

It is because the study of ideology is interwoven with the study of language, discourse and signification, that it is so essential to the development of Media Education. And it is because ideology is an issue which demands rigorous theoretical perspectives that I choose to emphasise it at the moment.

I have attempted to address three areas where theoretical issues are important to the development of Media Education: Language and Media, Audience and Media and Ideology and Media. Of course there are many other areas for study and these have been conceptualised differently at different times. Masterman (1985, 23) provides a list of key concepts, which include ideology and audience, from which teachers might work. The important thing is that one should try to draw up one's own list. It is not enough, however, to have some thing called a 'key concept', unless one recognises that any given key concept may be interpreted differently according to the theoretical perspective (or perspectives) adopted by the teacher. Key concepts do not exist in a vacuum. Nor should key concepts be uncritically accepted or institutionalised. There is a tendendency in England at the moment for a new set of key concepts for Media Education to be adopted as the new orthodoxy. Once this happens, the rot sets in. For Media Education, if it is to have practical application, must engage in genuine theoretical discussion and controversy. It should never degenerate into theoretical dogma or theoretical complacency.

On the other hand, if you begin to develop Media Education in South Africa without regard for theoretical issues, I do not think you will get very far. There is always the possibility that, devoid of theory, the subject would become tedious and remove from students whatever enjoyment they had from the media before education intervened. I would argue that the students will want to explain to themselves, or have explained to them or both, just how and why the media operate the way they do. They will want to know who decides what is pleasurable and according to what criteria. They will want to know how to produce their own messages and how to obtain the resources necessary for this process. They will also want to explain just how the media interrelate with forces of domination and subordination. And how the media can be made more accountable to the general populace whilst striving always to be free.

And in order to answer those questions, I am forced to utter what I tried to avoid earlier in this paper - there *is* nothing so practical as a good theory. ■

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Running on Empty: Film Studies in South Africa

Michael Chapman

If you have electricity in your school and a projector in the storeroom, you might be planning to introduce film studies in your English syllabus. As one student said in the Transvaal when the study of films was first considered: 'At last! The movies and TV are our world. Books belong to the past!' We may disagree, and film studies were obviously not intended as a diversion from the task of reading print. The student, nevertheless, has a point: films, TV, videos, advertising images, glossy magazines all speak to us in manifold, persuasive, perhaps even insidious ways, and the challenge is to channel the students' initial, probably unreflecting enthusiasm for films into an experience that has educational and social value.

We have to begin from the premise, I think, that the film is the twentieth century equivalent of melodrama or farce, and that, in consequence, our approach will be primarily 'deconstructive': that is, we will not simply grant the film the authority it desires, but will read in, around and through its presentation of character and theme to uncover its ideology, which might be concealed by the power of immediate emotional appeal, or not even be fully comprehended by the film's own director. In their article *'Chariots of Fire* and Docudrama' (***Crux***, 24,1, 1990), for example, Denise Newfield and Stanley Peskin identify behind the 'simple, clean metaphor of sport' in the film *Chariots of Fire* a simplification of characters and relationships, and an ideology which praises individual achievement over and above social reality while 'naturalizing' (placing beyond critical investigation) the values and culture of British upper class society. Reading not only through the visual allure of the film but in and around its text, we could go on to ask what purchase the ideology of *Chariots of Fire* can have in a South Africa, in 1990, struggling towards democracy. In the context of abortive cricket tours and debate about the redistribution of resources is the film finally feeding the white middle classes naive and comforting myths? To refer to Craig Mackenzie's article 'To Kill a Student's Pride' (***Crux***, 24,1, 1990), in which we are reminded that TED schools had the choice of studying *Chariots of Fire* or a selection of South African short stories, should moral and social responsibility not have guided us to study the stories? In pursuing the argument, do we feel as strongly as the Kenyan writer Ngugi does about the need, in a colonial or post-colonial society, to seize back history and art from the dominating presence of the metropolitan culture, and to insist on the primacy on syllabuses not of the 'first-world' imperialism of the film, but of the more relevant, humanizing possibilities of African literature? Whatever the replies to these questions, the deconstructive method begins to locate film study in a real situation of challenge and debate.

At the outset, we become acutely aware of how many films serve trivial, sentimental, sexist, conservative, or even reactionary ideas. Most blatantly, we have the tough individual (Rocky?) playing the vigilante because liberal courts cannot be trusted to keep criminals off the streets. (We are persuaded to applaud Rocky's methods, which are a romantic or bizarre version of American/capitalist self-sufficiency.) More deceptively, we sympathize, or empathize, with the good-hearted individual who loves children and animals and, utilizing both initiative and superior technology (a neat encapsulation of the American dream), defeats darker-hued villains, who are motivated by nothing as laudable as coherent political opposition to Uncle Sam, but by another version (perversion?) of the energies of capitalist enterprise: personal greed. To complicate matters, the chief of police to whom our individual-saviour reports is likely to be a black man: that is, a 'white' black man (Cosby?). As in mass entertainment generally, the idea of a romantic or sentimental individualism is presented as liberating, but is effectively divorced from the totality of any political or power structure. We are, of course, assailed in the daily round by mass entertainment, and our ability to analyze its 'meanings' should be seen as important as our study of so-called great books. Where the deconstructive analysis is particularly useful is when we are faced with a film - like *Chariots of Fire* or *Witness* - which disguises its melodrama behind a pretence of seriousness. Another such film is *Running on Empty*, which was described by several reviewers in the daily press as a moving and an honest examination of the effects of political action on the life of a sensitive teenager in his last year of high school. The subject seems suited for film studies at school, and, in the light of my comments so far, I should like to suggest an approach to this film.

Running on Empty presents the story of Danny Pope (River Phoenix), a talented musician who, after spending his life moving from school to school, has reached his senior year. Not only has he met his first love Lorna (Martha Plimpton), but he wants to go to college to study music. Yet family loyalties and commitments intervene in both his love life and his musical ambitions. The trouble is that Danny's parents, Arthur and Annie Pope, were political activists in the 1960s. Protesting at the time against the continuing Vietnam war, they bombed a napalm laboratory and, unintentionally, critically injured a janitor. As a result, they have been on the run from the FBI for fifteen years. The ending of the story is predictable within the 'morality' of American individualism and freedom. Sensing that the FBI is once more on their trail, father Arthur must again move the family. Wife Annie - who as a thwarted music student has taught Danny to play the piano - realizes that Danny cannot forever pay for his parents' choices. And Arthur is made to see this too. After some chauvinist bluster about his fine son, he cuts Danny free. As we reach for our kleenex, we know that Danny will be okay - he has maternal grandparents who are prepared to care for him and finance his studies.

My remarks and tone should have already suggested that I do not agree with the fulsome praise of many critics concerning the 'seriousness' of *Running on Empty*. Its very title announces that the director has adjudged the political commitments of the film to be devoid of substance, and what we are offered is a melodrama using the stock Hollywood motif of the American family as the core-unit of stable, middle-class society. Nonetheless, some deconstructive analysis proves to be educationally illuminating. First, we need to pursue the spurious 'seriousness' of the film. What has led critics to see social weight rather than cliché probably has something to do with the quirky political frame in which director Sidney Lumet places his family. We may be beguiled into thinking that the film is raising large social issues when it is promoting standard suburban morality. Danny is not in any significant way shaped by his parents' political choices; he survives as his own self, and - American society demands it - he must pursue his own freedom, talent and genius. (Of course, his own self is a kind of ideological 'type' - whether he is Danny, Superman or Clint Eastwood's man with no name depends more on costumery than real socio-psychological credibility.) In fact, it is the American system against which his parents had rebelled, that effortlessly moulds itself around Danny, thus giving him the opportunity to be himself.

The promise of any debate concerning the relation of the individual to society, therefore, is evaded, and we are manipulated into avoiding any real questions about the validity of political activism. The activists of the 1960s, for example, appear as pensionable hippies who have taken to robbing banks to finance what is now viewed as rebellion without a cause. Reagan - we recall - had restored American pride in itself as the leader of the free world, and we are told that as America has left Vietnam there is no longer any justification for protesting against its imperialist designs - the parallels with Nicaragua and the financing of Contras are not addressed. Not all 'radicals' are depicted as a lunatic fringe, however, and we are allowed to sympathize with Danny's parents. Arthur Pope condemns violence, and he appears more as the father than the political activist. If he mumbles about his Jewish, Communist, working-class roots, he does so in asides as he plays the heavy (concerned) father to the nostalgic background of 1960s James Taylor lyrics. Wife Annie's crisis of political vision is even more severe. Increasingly tormented by the fact that her actions in the sixties had almost led to the death of a precious individual (note, the janitor did not die, so we do not have to raise the question as to when a death in a political scenario becomes a murder), Annie is deciding to give herself up to the authorities as soon as her children can support themselves in life. With her role as wife and mother marginalizing her memory as activist, she arranges to meet her wealthy, conservative father who agrees - tears in his businessman's eyes - to pave Danny's pathway into the American dream. 'You could have had so much, Annie,' he tells his daughter over his untouched martini, 'but you threw it all away.' The film does not subject this remark to any scrutiny. It stands as 'American wisdom'.

The deconstructive analysis identifies, relentlessly, the governing ideology of *Running on Empty*. With Reaganite middle-class values firmly back in fashion, the film suggests, almost by its absence of interrogation, that the Popes had no real need to take the drastic action against the manufacture of napalm that their youthful impetuosity/idealism led them to do. Rather, American napalm bombing may be seen, in retrospect, as an unfortunate aberration which a deep-grained American integrity would itself have struggled somehow to correct. The scarred napalm victims are not, of course, given a voice in the film. Politically, *Running on Empty* is

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conservative in its fudging of political issues at the expense of romantic individualism. At the level of the family, it endorses the naivety of the depoliticised life. With such muddle-headed political thinkers, or non-thinkers, as Danny, it is no wonder that Americans were so easily led, by the golden individualist Kennedy, to believe that they were serving freedom and democracy in South East Asia.

The central purpose of this approach has been to show students how, and to suggest to them why, *Running on Empty* performs a sleight of hand with its own political metaphor. As a corollary to deconstruction, we might then turn to 'reading' the alternative media (*New Nation* or *Weekly Mail*) as an exercise in literarypolitical 'reconstruction'. The two approaches, conducted dialectically, should reveal some useful insights about the relation of 'texts' to social reality. As a concluding exercise, we could examine the wider, sociopolitical implications of film studies in South Africa. In a country where most students encounter overcrowded classrooms, a lack of desks and books, and undertrained teachers, should any of us be bothering about film studies? Is the whole venture a paradigm - we can make it a parody - of mass entertainment itself, as a superfluity of style running, morally and socially, on empty? ■

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FAMILIES AT WAR
Family in Theme & Narrative in Cry Freedom, A World Apart, and A Dry White Season

Alexander Johnston

Cry Freedom, *A World Apart*, and *A Dry White Season*, were all completed within a year of each other at the end of the nineteen eighties. This burst of activity brought to an end a long period in which the international film industry on the whole steered clear of South Africa as a setting and subject for major feature films. Such films as were made tended to appropriate the setting, without attempting to come to terms with the subject. It is not difficult to suggest some reasons for this. Western economic complicity in apartheid and fears of uncomfortable reflections on American or British domestic racial problems, made apartheid a difficult matter to approach head-on, and given its centrality in all aspects of South African life, it was difficult to portray the country without tackling it. Problems with censorship and other interference from the South African government, and as the Anti-Apartheid movement grew in strength, from that quarter too, made South Africa a subject fraught with pitfalls. Despite the rich sources of historical and dramatic material, the poignant, the tragic, the violent, one of history's great human interest stories had, for the most part to be left alone.

That all this changed from the mid-eighties onwards can be attributed to the way in which South Africa came to occupy a prominent place on the Western media and political agenda. A number of factors were influential in this. Firstly, secular changes in the balance of power unfavourable to the white minority government set in in the mid-seventies and intensified from then. This, coupled with greatly heightened black resistance to apartheid, gave the situation a dynamism and a short-term uncertainty, within a longer-range projection of inevitable liberation. The growing ability of the Anti-Apartheid Movement to highlight South Africa brought issues like sanctions and disinvestment onto the mainstream of political and corporate agendas, and the growing ability of the electronic media to cover the increasingly dramatic events with immediate, on-the-spot reportage, meant that by the mid eighties there was substantial public interest, and a substantial potential feature film audience well-schooled by television in the imagery of the South African situation.

Given the context in which these films were made, it is not surprising that they display a number of similarities. The context is that of an international film industry dominated by American studios and markets, geared to making feature films for audiences whose expectations are heavily influenced by repetitive experiences of genres, and forms of plot, narrative, and characterization. Despite the dominance of America, British individuals (Richard Attenborough, director of *Cry Freedom* is a good example) can gain strategic positions in the industry, and with careful marshalling of resources, small British companies (like the consortium which produced *A World Apart*) can make an impact. All three films then, are products of Anglo-American mainstream feature-making, although the participation of big American studios (respectively Universal and MGM) set off *Cry Freedom* and *A Dry White Season* from A World Apart. This influence reached as far as the main roles of white South Africans, all of which were taken in the films by European or American actors. By contrast, the black South African roles were taken by South African blacks, with the exception of Denzel Washington's Steve Biko in *Cry Freedom*. The only other Third World influence in the making of these films was that of the director of *A Dry White Season*, Euzhan Palcy, a black woman director from the French Antilles. Despite this, all three films were derived from individuals who had first hand experience of South Africa's struggles. *A Dry White Season* was an adaptation of the novel by André Brink, the engagé Afrikaner writer; Shawn Slovo's screenplay for *A World Apart* was based on her own childhood experiences as daughter of underground political activists, and *Cry Freedom* is based on two books by Donald Woods, relating his friendship with Steve Biko, subsequent harassment by the authorities and flight.

The similarities go deeper than that. All three films are variants on the same plot. A white person becomes aware of the realities of black life under apartheid, comes to feel an identification, and then a kinship with blacks, and as a result has to bear costs of persecution and loss. If all three films tell (broadly speaking) the same story, all of them use similar devices to tell it, an important element in all three being the family.

The family is of course one of the principal media in and through which a story can be told, either on the page or on the screen. It is not difficult to see why. To be part of a family is a virtually universal experience, one which offers numerous points of contact between the viewer (or reader) and the text. The family also offers a ready made dramatic structure in which characters are recognizable immediately by role, but within which there is room for flexibility. This structure can contain universal experiences in a manageable compass, it can portray continuity over generations, it is a theatre of conflict, it is at the heart of many social structures and processes, like mobility and stratification. It can translate and express social change at the individual level, and vast communal experiences like war and revolution can be made comprehensible and meaningful through it.

So prevalent is the family as a narrative medium, that to say that three films portraying contemporary South Africa use it, is not to say very much. But certain features of South African society under apartheid make it particularly apposite to this social reality.

For blacks, apartheid is an invasive system of social engineering and control that is totalitarian in its reach. It is totalitarian in the extent to which it destroys individuals' ability to control aspects of their lives which are considered to be private in more open societies. So invasive is apartheid, that some of its heaviest costs are borne at the level of the family. Among the most important features of a system which has been used to deny blacks political power, and exploit them as cheap labour, are race classification, racial apportionment of land and forced removals to enforce it, the migrant labour system, and the prohibitions on mixed marriages and sex across the colour line. (Although these last two acts have been repealed, they were in force in the periods when all three films were set. A recent film squarely confronts issues raised by them. *A Private Life*, directed by Francis Gerrard, and starring Bill Flynn and Jana Cilliers, deals with the true story of a tragic case of a family destroyed by these acts, and as such would be directly relevant to this paper. As far as I know however, it has not been shown in South Africa, although it was made here, and until I have seen it, it will have to be excluded.) Each of these, in its way, is destructive of settled family life, and it is widely acknowledged that this aspect of apartheid is one of its most serious iniquities. For these reasons, there are particular incentives to use the family as a narrative device in telling South African stories, to add to the general utility of the medium.

What follows is an attempt to analyze the place of families in each of the films in turn, leading to a comparative discussion of all three.

Cry Freedom

The only literal family which is portrayed in *Cry Freedom* is the Woods family. Donald Woods (Kevin Kline) is the liberal editor of the East London *Daily Despatch*. To his principled opposition to apartheid, another dimension is added when he acquires first hand knowledge of the conditions under which blacks live. He achieves this through association with Steve Biko (Denzel Washington), an association which begins when Woods writes an article denouncing Biko's philosophy of black self-reliance as another form of racism, and then retracts when Biko puts the case at first hand.

Woods' conversion to a more activist political stance is achieved through the force of Biko's personality and arguments, by the revelations of just how degrading township life can be, and by the crass intransigence of the South African authorities. Pervading the whole process however is the sense of kinship and community extending beyond the nuclear family which black South Africans are portrayed as enjoying. This is shown in Woods' visits to a rural clinic, and the self-help community Biko runs. Crucially to the film's values, by the time Woods and his wife attend Biko's funeral, this kinship and community seem open to them, despite Biko's own teaching on black self-reliance, and the need to keep white liberals at an arm's length. This aspect of the film has given rise to a certain amount of controversy, with one account claiming that Biko merely manipulated the relationship to gain a platform (Woods' newspaper) for his views. Woods defended himself against this accusation by listing several of Biko's white friends, other than himself. But whatever the case, the film does not resolve the tension between Biko's philosophy of Black Consciousness, and its own portrayal of the kinship between black and white opponents of apartheid.

Certainly Woods' relationship with Biko is idealized well beyond the point of sentimentality, partly in the gently sparring dialogue, but mostly in the visual treatment, with its pastoral backdrops bathed in golden light (one of which was extensively used in the film's publicity material). Indeed, so idealized is this relationship, that it is reminiscent of the blood brother theme typical of colonial fiction, in which a white man and a black man seal brotherhood in a blood covenant, usually with disastrous results for the black party (a good recent example is the film of John Gordon Davis's *Hold My Hand I'm Dying*). Of course it is not an equal relationship. Biko is the teacher, Woods the novice, but still the association perpetuates the myth that race relations are essentially personal relations, affairs of the heart, to be improved, not so much by accommodation of power to power, but through personal conversion.

Woods' journey is from a position where he opposes apartheid on grounds of abstract principle, to one where he becomes involved in the struggle against it through a flesh and blood understanding of what it does to people. If he begins from a point where he is predominantly against the government and its laws, he ends at a point where he is predominantly for black liberation; from a point where his principles (applied he believes even-handedly) lead him to denounce Biko, to a point where black people say to him, 'You and Wendy are our brother and sister'.

The conflicts and the costs engendered by this conversion are seen in the context of the Woods family. Although Wendy Woods in interviews subsequent to their flight mourned the loss of intimacy of small town life, in fact the Woods family is depicted as largely self-contained and self-sufficient, in contrast to the more open and flexible patterns of black family life depicted in the film. Security police harassment, subsequent to Donald Woods' banning, which culminates in the sending of an acid-impregnated T-shirt to one of their children, forces the Woods to contemplate escape, an issue which at first causes sharp dissension between Donald and Wendy.

Although the principal medium for carrying the story and its values in *Cry Freedom* is the relationship between Woods and Biko, the idea of family provides powerful support in illustrating the means, the rewards, and the costs of Woods' conversion.

A World Apart

Three families are depicted in *A World Apart*, the Roths, the Abelsons, and the family of Elsie, the Roths' maid. (No source that I have seen, including the published version of Shawn Slovo's screenplay gives the family name of Elsie and her brother Solomon.) The dynamics within and between them are central to the film's narrative structure, and its values.

The Roth family is based on the family of Joe Slovo, Ruth First and their children, and the screenplay is based on Shawn Slovo's memories of the period (the film is set in 1963) when her father was away from home doing underground work for the African National Congress, and the South African Communist Party, and her mother, also involved in activism and political journalism, was detained without trial. The central relationship in the film is between Diana Roth (Barbara Hershey) and her 13 year old daughter Molly (Jodhi May). The secrecy and urgency of Diana's work, her wholehearted commitment to it, and the austerity and tight control of her character (partly no doubt inherent, partly imposed by the demands of her cause), leave Molly alone, confused and resentful. She lacks the emotional support she needs to cope with school, the fickleness of friends, and the threatening adult world. But because this is a political film as well as a drama of personal relationships, the family motif appears in order to make points other than those of mother-daughter conflict. When Molly goes to Diana's newspaper office, Diana is dictating a story about the destruction of African family life an ironic counterpoint to the effect of the struggle on her own. Another irony comes

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when her interrogator shows her a drawing done by his six year old son, emphasizing his closeness in age to one of Diana's younger daughters, trying to use her pain of separation, and the revelation of his own humanity to persuade her to believe that only her own perversity and not his unjust laws and arbitrary powers are keeping her from her family.

The Abelsons are the family of Yvonne, who at the beginning of the film is Molly's best friend. June Abelson (Kate Fitzpatrick) provides a contrast to Diana Roth, illustrating for Molly's benefit what she has gained and lost by having Diana for a mother rather than June. June is exuberant and hedonistic, free and generous with her affection, the warmth of her personality reflected in the scarlet of her lips and party dress, by contrast with Diana's habitually sombre shades. For a minor role, June's is quite a complex character; despite her warmth, she is shallow, but despite her shallowness, she is sufficiently aware of Diana's work to offer her help, an offer that Diana knows is not a serious prospect. June's version of motherhood is not a credible alternative to Diana's. Warmth and affection expressed only behind walls and intercom systems, not daring to confront issues of justice beyond the security perimeter, are not enough, but even within these limits, they point up the things that Molly lacks in her life. Gerald Abelson (Toby Salaman) is defensive and suspicious, ineffectively masking his anger at the Roths for being what they are, in exaggerated concern for Molly's safety when she visits them on foot. We are left with the impression that all will not be well with the Abelson's, as June develops a drinking problem, condemned by her shallowness and subordination to Gerald, to view life from afar and through glass.

Elsie's family also has an important role to play. In what is a classic South African situation, Elsie, separated from her own children by apartheid laws, has a special relationship with Molly (economically, but powerfully suggested, more in visual than dialogue references). It is through Elsie that Molly goes to an African township, and experiences the direct, uncomplicated welcome into another family situation that seems to be missing in the white world. Solomon, Elsie's brother gives her on that occasion a bracelet in the ANC colours. He speaks powerfully and movingly at a political gathering which Molly attends, and as a result is arrested and murdered in custody. The acceptance, the keepsake, the speech and his martyrdom, all help to validate Diana's committment in Molly's eyes, and his funeral seals a reconciliation between them, one which promises a new basis for their relationship.

A Dry White Season

A Dry White Season takes as its themes the large-scale subjects of apartheid's repression, the renewed black liberation struggle in opposition to it which began with the Soweto rising of 1976, and the possibilities of white identification and involvement in this struggle. These themes are woven into a narrative which relates the destruction of two families. Gordon Ngubene's family is destroyed, almost erased, by the coercive power of the state. That of Ben du Toit, his employer, is torn apart by dissension over his involvement in investigating, and publicizing the collective martyrdom of the Ngubenes.

Ben du Toit is a Johannesburg schoolteacher, a law-abiding, patriotic Afrikaner with an integrity and sense of justice which, within the narrow confines of family, job, and ethnic group, he has had no great need to test and exercise. The opportunity to do so arises when the family of his gardener, Gordon Ngubene, becomes caught up in the murderous events of June 1976 in Soweto.

Up to this point, the relationship between Ben and Gordon, and the two families has obviously followed a South African stereotype. Within the prevailing codes, Ben is a good employer, and in a paternalistic way takes some of the responsibilities which in a free society would be Gordon's own — that of paying for the Ngubene childrens' education for instance. A closeness exists between the two sons which illustrates another South African stereotype, childhood as a time when black and white can relate to each other naturally, before the 'proper' relations of master and servant have to be asserted. It is worthwhile looking at the scene which makes this point, because complexities can be read into it which go beyond its rather superficial surface. In an extended credit sequence without dialogue, the two boys happily play football together. Their pleasure in each others' company is important in that it signals at the very beginning how the boy will later choose with his father to adopt the black cause. Quite soon however, the white boy picks up the soccer ball and changes the game to rugby, a change which allows his physical strength and knowledge of the game to prevail. Although the scene is played throughout with laughter and good feelings, it can be an indication of how power relations are, how they might be manipulated, and how rules can be changed.

Gordon's son Jonathan is arrested and whipped by the police for taking part in a demonstration. Gordon shows the boy's wounds to Ben, who is disinclined to interfere, beyond sympathy and a cautionary word to steer clear of politics. When there is a larger demonstration on June 16, Jonathan is again involved, and like many others is shot dead. In an implacable sequence of events, Gordon investigates the circumstances of his son's death, and a shaken, but as yet unchanged Ben takes the case up through the 'proper channels' with the police. Gordon in turn is arrested for gathering affidavits concerning the shootings, and he is tortured to death in custody. Having viewed his battered corpse (on his first visit to a township), Ben resolves to investigate and publicize the case. As a result of his involvement, he is ostracized socially and at school (and so is his son), while at home, his family divides neatly. He and his son are for involvement, while his wife and daughter are unable to come to terms with the changes this would bring in their lives, and the costs it would involve. Ben's wife leaves him, taking the children with her. The family has broken up, though the boy remains loyal to his father. The destruction of the Ngubene family is completed, when Emily, Gordon's wife, having lost her right to remain in the township with his death, is sent back to her tribal 'homeland' and dies resisting the forced removal. The parallel with Ben's family continues, as harassment and intimidation from the police escalates to the point where his daughter betrays him to them. Her brother outguesses her however, and although Ben is murdered by the security police, the information he has collected is published. His son has found a surrogate father in Stanley, a black political activist. Stanley has helped both Gordon and Ben, and unlike both, is a man of direct action who in the last scene of the film shoots down the policeman who has murdered them.

Politics & the Family in Anti-Apartheid Films

As I pointed out earlier in this paper, the idea of the family can be used to give structure to a narrative, to point up themes - perhaps historically large ones with universal resonance - to personalize, dramatize, and make material accessible to the viewer or reader through the use of universal role models and experiences. And the summaries of the part played by the idea of the family in the three films is intended to suggest some ways in which this has been done. Perhaps two further points need to be made.

Firstly we can try to generalize about how black and white families are portrayed in the films. We are left with the impression of white families who cannot enjoy private satisfactions because of the wider societal context. June Abelson's cheerful hedonism turns to solitary drinking, and her generous spirit towards Molly and her mother is thwarted under the pressure of Gerald's fears and insecurities about the challenge the Roths pose to his privileged position. The Woods' enjoy the emotional satisfactions which Molly knows she is being denied, but they lose their comfortable and secure existence first to intimidation and persecution, and then to exile. The du Toit family is destroyed by violence and internal dissension. In each case the family fails to be a self-contained provider of satisfactions, although all or some of its members want that. Because the private satisfactions which are the reward for being privileged and white in South Africa cannot be enjoyed when members become aware of the poverty and oppression round them, each white family experiences sharp conflict. Molly Roth resents her mother's distance, secrecy and preoccupation. Wendy Woods resents uprooting her family, Ben du Toit is deserted by his wife, and betrayed by his daughter.

In the case of the Woods family, the conflict is easily resolved; Wendy comes to the decision that exile is the best option despite its costs, and the triumphalist rhetoric of the closing scenes leaves us in no doubt that the family has chosen correctly. Molly Roth comes, through her contact with Elsie, Solomon and their family, to align herself in spirit with black liberation, and so to come to terms with her mother's commitment. Although the du Toit family is destroyed, and Ben has been killed, his son has actively involved himself in the father's choices and work, and looks to the future with a black father figure in Stanley. Only the Abelsons remain locked in their private world of repressed tensions.

By contrast, we have the impression that the black families portrayed in the three films are more open, more flexible, less prone to conflict. Black families have to be more flexible when it comes to definitions of kinship, because the ravages of migrant labour, poverty, and political repression mean that responsibilities have to be widely diffused. It is not a large step from this to the kind of acceptance and inclusiveness that draws in Donald Woods, Molly Roth, and if not the doomed Ben du Toit, his son, the film's hope for the next generation.

As for the question of conflict in the black families portrayed, it is true that Jonathan, Gordon Ngubene's son, holds his father up as an example of a generation which has acquiesced in white power. But he does this not with the bitterness and contempt that has sometimes characterized such generational conflict in black South African politics. He does so more in sorrow at the waste of his potential. Aside from this the black families are shown as free from conflict. It might be argued that this is only because the emphasis in all three films is on the white families, and if the black families were more central to the narrative the portraits would be more complex. That may be true, but it is also probably true that the film-makers were concerned to promote a show of black solidarity in the face of apartheid, and warring black families would not enhance that.

If the first point to be made is the different portrayals of black and white families, the second concerns the political content of the films. As I have argued the family provides a useful and widely prevalent instrument for humanizing and making accessible large issues, including political ones. But it does so at the expense of simplifying and romanticizing them, in effect also of domesticating them. By focussing on the Ngubene family's martyrdom, and not on the demands of the ANC, and its policy of armed struggle, *A Dry White Season* domesticates black aspirations for the benefit of white audiences. Even Stanley, the activist who balances Gordon the victim, is played as an avenging paladin without institutional links of any overt kind. It is true that the ANC's fortunes were at a low ebb in South Africa at the time *A Dry White Season* is set, but to allow no institutional expression for black politics at all, hinders rather than helps a sound appraisal of the situation.

Diana Roth's relationship with her daughter is more important than her institutional links. Are she and Gus communists, like the Slovo parents on whom they are modelled? The only people who call them that are a spiteful schoolgirl who probably doesn't know the meaning of the word, and a security policeman, one of a breed whose definition of communist is notoriously inclusive. Diana's most explicit political statements are, significantly enough, about families — the report she dictates about migrant labour, and a reference to Elsie being unable to see her children. The emphasis on Diana and Molly's relationship, and the ideological obscurity helps to domesticate the political content of the film.

By concentrating on Steve Biko's relationship with a white liberal, even though the development of the liberal's ideas is credited, *Cry Freedom* obscures and muddies the significance of Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement.

In these instances, the three anti-apartheid films of the late eighties conform to the western film industry's usual pattern of domesticating political matters in terms of personal relations, emotional conversions, and moral choices, in settings like that of the family. If we understand politics as the terrain where material interests, rival ideologies, and organized groupings struggle, and power must be matched with power, then these films can scarcely be said to be political at all. The anti-apartheid movement (in the broadest sense of the term) was the kind of moral crusade which lent itself to the treatment the film industry gives to political subjects. The constraints which had prevented the making of features about, as distinct from set in South Africa were sufficiently weakened by the mid-eighties, and the anti-apartheid feature had its moment. Although the constraints are even weaker now, the emergence of new issues and altered configurations of forces both between and within the black and white political movements suggest that films like the three discussed here, are unlikely to be made again, except perhaps as period pieces. ■

NEWSFRONT
An Entrée to Film Technology

John Hookham

We all know that it is not necessary to know anything about the printing process to read and understand books. It is however impossible to fully appreciate and understand a film unless one knows something about the technology of filmmaking, because the meaning of a film and its technique are integrally related. How is what.

Many students have very little or no understanding of film technology and this attempts to address some of these problems by offering an introduction to the filmmaking process.

Let us begin by examining this shot of the camera operator Len and his assistant Chris. Here Len is operating a Mitchell camera. We can identify it as such because it has a magazine which in profile looks like Mickey Mouse's ears. It also has an offset viewfinder which means there's a certain amount of parallax error or disparity between what the lens of the camera sees and what the operator sees through the viewfinder.

Newsfront is meticulous about period detail and the Mitchell would have been the kind of newsreel camera used at that time. Later on in the film Len operates a different camera, an Arriflex which is significantly different in that it has a reflex system which enables the cameraman to see exactly what the lens is seeing and to frame the picture accordingly. The Arriflex is also much lighter and easier to operate (see figure 1 and 2).

If we now look at the Mitchell we will see 3 different lenses at the front of the camera. Each lens has a different focal length which means a different angle of view - a wide angle; a normal angle; and a narrow angle or long focal length lens. The camera operator can change the focal length and the composition of each shot by simply changing from one lens to the other.

A camera operator operating today would probably have a zoom lens which has a variable focal length, and she/he could simply alter the focal length of the lens itself. Here, however, you would have to change from one to the other and it would give you a variety of only 3 different kinds of shots.

The camera lens focuses an image onto a strip of film. Film is simply a light sensitive material consisting of silver halide crystals (the emulsion) coated onto a flexible base (celluloid). When light is allowed to fall onto the emulsion, the silver halide crystals change chemically to metallic silver thus producing a latent image. Since film is light sensitive it must be stored in the dark and only when it passes behind the lens is light allowed to fall on it thus 'exposing' the film.

The film stock starts off in a magazine chamber and runs down through the camera travelling behind the lens where it is exposed to light and then continues through the camera and is taken up on the other side of the magazine where it is coiled onto a spool on the other side of the magazine. Film travels through the camera in a

Figures 1 and 2

staggered motion like that of a sewing machine, advancing by one frame at a time.

It moves at a speed of 24 frames per second which means that each frame is exposed to light for 1/48th of a second before moving on. This staggered motion is accompanied by a system consisting of a shutter, claw and registration pin. The shutter is hemispherical and rotates behind the lens in front of the film. The registration pin enters the sprockets i.e. the punched holes on the side of the film and holds the film steady while the frame is being exposed. The shutter completes a full rotation allowing light to fall on the film. The pin then retracts as the claw hooks into a sprocket and pulls the film down.

Each roll of film runs for about 10 minutes and when depleted the magazine must be changed. This is what we see the assistant camera operator doing. He is taking the film out of the can supplied by the manufacturer and transferring it to the magazine. He has to do this in a light-tight place to ensure that the film is not prematurely exposed. In the absence of a dark room on location he carries this out in a black bag. This is quite a difficult procedure because you can't see what you are doing and you have to do it by feel. And if you are under a lot of pressure from the camera operator to be fast it is quite easy to make a mistake.

Let us examine the lens again. The lens is similar to the human eye in that it can focus. Your eye focuses automatically but the lens of a camera has to be focused manually and focused on a particular object depending on how far it is from the camera. The camera operator can select what to focus on and then 'pull' focus from one object to another.

In addition to focusing, the lens has an iris like the iris of our eyes which opens up to allow more light in or closes down when the light is very bright. Our eyes also adjust automatically to different intensities of light in the same way. But again the iris in a camera has to be set manually. The camera operator usually has to measure the intensity of the light and having done that sets the iris or the exposure on the lens, which is measured in f stops.

In addition each lens has a different focal length which allows a wider or narrower view of the scene. A wide angle view gives the effect of looking through the wrong side of a telescope so that the object appears further away. A long focal length lens on the other hand allows the camera operator only a narrow view of the scene and has an effect similar to looking through a telescope the right way, i.e. bringing the object closer.

By varying the angle of view then, the camera operator is able to alter the different sizes of the shot. If she/he chooses to film the subject using a wide angle lens he/she might be able to see the entire subject, which is called a *long shot*. By changing to another lens without moving the camera you might only be able to see the subject from the waist up and this is called a *mid shot*. By changing to an even narrower lens, a longer focal length lens you might only see the subject's head and shoulders, called a *close up*. In that way she/he is able to vary the different sizes of the shots.

He/she can, of course, also move the camera in a number of ways. By placing the camera on a trolley-like vehicle, called a dolly, the camera can be made to move through space. Usually the dolly is placed on tracks like railway tracks to ensure straight and smooth movements. Moving the camera towards the filmed subject is called *tracking in*. To move away from the subject is called *tracking out*.

Another way of moving the camera is to move it alongside the subject as she/he walks. The tracks would then be laid parallel to the path that the subject would move along. This is *tracking with* the subject. If the tracks are laid along the subject's path and the subject then walks towards the camera which moves back maintaining the same distance between camera and subject, this is called *tracking back*. Tracking is always associated with a movement through space providing the viewer with a sense of depth. Tracking shots can be used in a number of ways,for example, lyrically or to produce anxiety in the viewer. There is, however, no inherent meaning in the shot and it depends on the context in which it appears.

The camera can also remain static with only its head moving horizontally from right to left or left to right. This we call *panning*. The camera can pan from one object to another. While panning is usually used to establish a relationship between objects, to connect disparate elements in a scene, panning can also be used to stress the distance (emotional or otherwise) between one subject and another. Again it depends on the context in which the shot appears.

The camera can also *tilt* by remaining static and simply lifting the camera head up or down along a vertical axis. Shots like this are called tilts. By placing the camera on a crane the whole camera can also physically move up or down in space. These kinds of shots are called *craning shots*.

It is also possible to combine these shots: for instance you can track, pan and tilt at the same time or employ various combinations of these shots.

The camera can also be placed in such a way as to establish a relationship between it and the subject: for example, by placing the camera above the subject, he/she usually appears more vulnerable, or if placed below the subject looking up, the subject often appears dominant and powerful.

The size of the shot also establishes a relationship between viewer and subject. Generally speaking, close-ups are more emotional and long shots normally more informative. But again, this is only a general principle and depends upon the context in which the shot appears in the film.

Let us now examine the sequence with the camera operators filming the new immigrants. Since they are filming inside the light levels are low and they have to supplement their lighting with artificial lights. In this sequence Charlie, the opposition camera operator, is able to sabotage Len's shot because the camera has an offset viewfinder. He would not have been able to see what was happening in front of the lens because what he sees of the scene through the viewfinder is different from what the lens sees. The difference between these two views is termed the parallax error.

We can also see that the assistant camera operator is recording sound on tape, reel to reel. The sound is always kept separate from the picture. It is only in the final stages of the filmmaking process that the sound and the picture are fused together onto the same piece of film. The main reason for keeping the two separate is because while the film moves in a staggered motion, the sound has to be run in a smooth manner.

The only sound which is recorded while filming is the dialogue. All background sounds, whether music or sound effects, are added later.

Figures 3, 4 and 5

Because the sound and the picture are kept separate there needs to be some kind of system in the editing process to keep the picture and the sound running simultaneously with each other. This is done very simply with a *clapper board*. The clapper board is placed in front of the subject to be photographed. The numbers written on it identify the sequence and these are called out and are recorded on tape. The clapper board is clapped. The camera films this so that it has a visual record of the scene while the tape recorder has a sound record of the same information. The clap and the scene are therefore recorded both visually and aurally.

An editing machine is able to play both sound and picture together by aligning the visual clap with the aural clap. The sound and picture are then run together with the sound matching its equivalent picture. We call this running 'in sync'.

An examination of the sequence with Len and Chris running into the labs to deliver the exposed film is useful to an understanding of film processing.

The film has been taken out of the magazine and returned to the manufacturer's (eg. Kodak's) cans. This is also done in the dark so that no further light can fall on it. The exposed film is now taken to the labs to be processed. Since this is newsreel material it is desirable to process it as quickly as possible. Film is usually processed overnight and then collected the following morning.

During processing the film is placed in a developer which does exactly what the exposure to light did - it changes the silver halide crystals that have been exposed to light to metallic silver. The film is allowed to develop for a certain period of time and then placed in another chemical which stops the developing process. From there the film is placed in another chemical which fixes it, ensuring that the image is a permanent one. When the film has been processed it is delivered to the studio and is then viewed by the producer. This is called viewing rushes or dailies. The producer views them and decides which shots should be in the newsreel and which should be excluded.

Moving onto the scene with Chris and Len leaving AG's office, the viewer can see the two characters walking towards the camera which tracks with them down the passage. A number of things occur in this shot - a *track*, a *pan* and a *focus pull*. The camera tracks with the characters down the passage then stops and pans with them, allowing them to leave frame. As they leave frame the focus shifts, by being pulled from Chris to the editor in the background. This focus pull draws the audience's attention from Chris to the editor who is busy cutting film.

Once the rushes have been viewed the film is taken to the editor who edits the material, constructing a narrative out of the shots by imposing an order on it - giving it a beginning, a middle and an end. This is based on a selection of shots that the producer has made. In *Newsfront*, the editor runs the film through a viewer and cuts it. Today editors use splicers to cut film but then, (and here again *Newsfront* is accurate in its period detail), editors used scissors.

We see that he looks at the frames and then, holding a piece of film, he stretches out the full length of his arm (see figure 3). He has decided on a particular shot that he will cut in and he is now measuring the film to decide how long that shot is going to be. He measures about 6 foot, twice the length of his arm, and he cuts it in. He is a newsreel editor pressured by time and cannot be meticulous but he is sufficiently experienced to know how long this shot lasts on screen. We too can work this out easily - if 35 mm film runs at 90 feet a minute, then 6 feet of that would be about 4 seconds of screen time.

The camera tracks back slightly and we can see the sound editor at work. We hear dialogue being played backwards. The sound editor runs the picture and sound through a synchroniser and he is then able to build up a number of sound tracks perfectly in sync with the picture. One track may contain only dialogue, another music, and a third sound effects. He edits in the appropriate sound to match the picture the editor has already cut.

Once this has been completed, the only sound still to be added is the Voice Over Commentary. This is done during mixing. Also at this time all the sound tracks are mixed together onto one master sound track.

In this sequence the viewer might notice that the narrator is sitting in a sound-proof booth. The film is projected onto the screen (figure 4) and the sound that the narrator delivers is recorded directly onto the soundtrack in sync with the picture. The producer cues the narrator (figure 5) and the light comes on for him to talk. The sound mixer has a number of knobs, each one controlling the volume on a different sound track. While the picture runs the sound mixer sets the volume on each track and then mixes them all on to one master. This is delivered to the labs who produce a final print which has the picture and the sound running alongside it. This then is the final print that is sent to the theatres and viewed by audiences.

Now that we have examined the technology let us move on to explore how the technology operates in practice by examining in some detail a few scenes in the film. In this way we will get some idea of how a director construcrs a filmic sequence.

I shall consider the dance scene in the film. This sequence is made up 3 different kinds of shots: firstly shots of the singer, secondly shots of the crowd dancing, and thirdly shots of the principal actors. All of these shots are edited together by the editor to form a coherent narrative sequence.

It is important to let students know that a scene like this is not shot in script order but was later edited into the order that appears on the screen. Rather, the director would have broken it down and first filmed a number of shots of the band playing. Having done that he, in all likelihood, would then have shot a number of shots of the crowd dancing and eating, in either long shot or close up. Finally he would then have shot the principal actors.

In tackling the last elements tracks would have been laid across the room and the camera placed on a dolly. The first tracking shot starts on Chris (figure 6), tracks with him and then pans across to look at the girls (figure 7) and then pans and tracks further to take in the girl standing alone on the side (figure 8). Then Chris enters frame (figure 9). What is interesting about the shot is that it starts off as an objective shot and then becomes slightly subjective as we see his point of view. Then when he walks back into the shot it once again becomes objective.

Once he has asked her to dance they leave frame on the left. Filming would have stopped at this point and resumed as they enter frame again, using the same tracks as they dance across the room. Extras are allowed to walk into frame.

Figures 6, 7, 8 and 9

Figures 10, 11, 12 and 13

Then when they stop dancing, Chris and Ellie move back down the room talking while the camera tracks with them (figure 10). It is essentially simple, but edited together this scene appears complex. Shots of the band, shots of the crowd and shots of the principal actors are all cut together in a coherent narrative sequence that appears seamless.

This is followed by the scene of Chris and Ellie in bed together. It is a very simple scene made up of only three shots. Firstly a mid-shot of the characters in bed, then a closer shot from a different angle and then a long shot of them. The mid-shot is fairly informative and neutral and the editor cuts closer to them as the conversation becomes more intimate. The audience is cued to pay attention because of the cutting to a closer shot. Finally the cut to the long shot distances us from the scene and the characters and therefore prepares us for the next sequence.

Although it is simple the soundtrack is rich. Students should be reminded too that this scene would have been shot in a studio in a constructed set. The walls are cardboard flats and not real. A large crew would be watching the action despite the appearance of intimacy. The reality is a constructed reality. The only sound recorded is the sound of their voices. But we hear two other sounds on the soundtrack, added later by the sound editor. These are cricket noises and the sound of a train whistle. These soundtracks contribute to the atmosphere and verisimilitude. The sound of the train (which presumably the sound editor thought about very carefully) adds richness to the sequence. This scene and the entire film is in fact about loss of innocence, and it seems to me that the train sound is evocative of this loss of innocence because of its association with travel, distance, the loneliness of the night, etc.

The wedding sequence is constructed along similar lines to the Redex dance sequence. Let us look at it from the point where they start dancing. The camera is again on a dolly (here on rubber wheels rather than on tracks). The sequence starts on an unknown couple, tracks with them across the hall and allows Len to come into frame. The action is carefully choreographed to allow Charlie to enter frame. The camera pans with him and then starts tracking gently across to the left to pick up Chris and Ellie. They talk for a while and the camera tracks back with them into the centre of the room. Len then comes back into frame and starts walking down the room while the camera tracks, moving along with him. He asks Amy for a dance (figure 11) and they leave frame. The camera holds on a character and then the focus is pulled from him to Len's ex-wife (figure 12). The shot is complex and made up of tracking, panning and focus pulling. The audience is immediately made aware of something happening between Amy and Len by virtue of their performances and more forcefully by the focus pull. We are cued to see that something is happening that affects or interests the ex-wife and that is 'about' Len and Amy.

The scene cuts to Len and Amy dancing (figure 13) and then cuts back to the ex-wife. Her gaze or look directs our attention to what is happening between Len and Amy. (It also ensures that slower members of the audience grasp what more sophisticated viewers already know). The camera is static at this moment as they dance before us and move closer till they are right in front of the camera. They look at each other and move away, the camera tracking with them to a secluded spot.

The music changes now, through a cross fade. The source music fades out while theme music fades in. (In other words we move from diegetic to non-diegetic sound.) The naturalistic music is replaced by the music of their making, music in their heads, music that they compose or construct. In other words we move from 'reality' to a 'poetic reality'. The real world of the other characters dancing behind them is still there for us to see slightly out of focus and clearly peripheral, irrelevant to Len and Amy.

In the flood sequence the film moves from colour back to black and white. The use of colour in *Newsfront* seems to me to be employed opportunistically and pragmatically. When a sequence is in black and white it is usually because real newsreel footage will be edited into the sequence. This creates the illusion that the characters are really there, present during events that really happened.

Let us start with Chris being awakened by the phone. He goes down the stairs and climbs into the boat. It is important once again to remind students that this is a constructed reality. A flood has not really taken place and this is not a flooded city, it has been constructed. The shot where Chris rows his boat outside was filmed on a lake and the buildings have been specially constructed out of cardboard and then dropped into the water. The doors through which he moves are also constructed doors and function in a number of ways (figure 14). Firstly they give a sense of space and depth to the shot giving the illusion of a real city and secondly by blocking off the sides like this the size of the set and number of flats can be reduced.

Chris rows down the river and we cut to a high angle shot of a flooded city. This of course is authentic newsreel footage of the period. We can see that throughout the sequence real footage is going to be cut in with acted or constructed action. After the sequence where he leaves the church hall we are presented with period footage in which you see a number of men rowing down a main street battling against the current (figure 15). We cut to Chris ostensibly rowing down a main street of a town in flood. If the viewer looks carefully she/he will notice that the colour does not quite match, but the method attempts to authenticate Chris's place in history. He seems to be really there. Then we witness his death as he succumbs to the waters.

I have not dealt with the complex question of the relationship between technology and meaning but have simply attempted to give an introduction to film technology and the processes by which films are constructed. This may seem to be a limited goal but is one which I consider to be important to students encountering film studies for the first time. ■

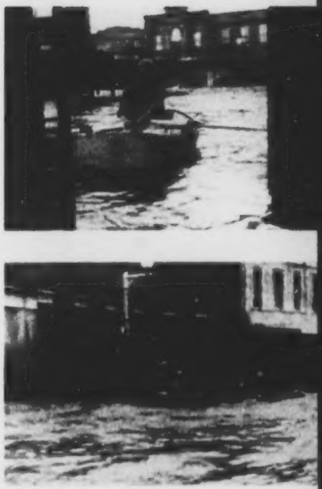
Figure 14 and 15

Part IV

Creating New Possibilities for Media Awareness

The chapters that form this part entitled *Creating New Possibilities for Media Awareness* are divided into two subsections in terms of the media forms they consider, firstly filmic and televisual forms, and secondly print media.

What this set of contributions have in common is their intention to develop critical tools or approaches for teaching that can be applied to categories of media and can be adapted and inform teaching practice. These authors employ theoretical ideas developed in disciplines as diverse as linguistics, psychology or sociology as tools in order to develop critical and analytic skills. They avoid a prescriptive approach to any media text and incorporate popular culture as deserving our attention.

In the section that considers filmic and televisual media, Basckin proposes certain concepts and points of view to facilitate a critical discourse on television. He refers to selected psychoanalytic concepts as potentially useful for this critical discourse. In a different vein, Higgins reacts against a particular approach to film, which he sees as characterized by that offered by Chapman, as a refusal to deal with the specificity of film, of film as a specific signifying practice. Premised on Metz's dictum that 'It's because film is easy to understand that it's difficult to explain', Higgins proceeds to advance an extremely thorough and concise overview of critical cinema. This valuable summation outlines the major debates surrounding the question of realism and representation that have raged among film theorists sporadically since film theorist Bazin and Italian Neo-Realism (towards the end of World War II). Higgins' concern with representation spreads to that which has been described as Third Cinema, (see the chapter by Maingard) with a caution that images produced by oppressed need not be liberating or empowering. Chapman's response to Higgins' criticism offers readers the opportunity to consider their positions which clearly deserve fuller articulation. In contrast to this filmic approach, Ashworth argues that the use of principles of main language teaching should inform the teaching of Media Education. Ashworth deals with representations, moving from single images through to filmic representations. Her work deals with unpicking a discourse, and simultaneously exposing the manipulation of the viewer's sympathy.

Media's use of realism, initiated in Higgins' chapter, forms a partial focus of Prinsloo's paper where considerations of narrative and realism are considered as a possible entry into encouraging critical understanding of film, televisual and diverse media. Prinsloo suggests using structuralism as an accessible and enjoyable entry into narrative that will draw on the students' existing knowledge. Implications of narrative elements can then be identified and developed to levels of sophistication appropriate to the group. Jordan extends narrative ideas into genre when she delivers an account of her initiative in the area of the horror genre, considering both audience and challenges to the genre. Willoughby in turn offers a laudable and thorough study of the 'kiddie' in local advertising. He advances arguments on different levels of enquiry and considers those matters theoretical and contextual which also relate to power and to pleasure.

This section concludes with contributions by Marx and Sey, demonstrating sophisticated understandings of popular culture and filmic theory relevant to rigorous study in higher education.

Moving to the next block of articles dealing with print media specifically, Bertelsen offers an exciting approach to teaching about the news whereby news as story telling and news as a prime site of cultural/discursive conflict are encountered. Gillwald considers a methodology for approaching the issues of realism and the representations of gender wherein the intention is to provide students with the invisible aspects of media production so they are able to penetrate, intervene and challenge them. Emdon offers a detailed chapter which presents a method for readers to analyse information published by newspapers. His specific focus and examples relate to the newspaper coverage of the Natal conflict. His encompassing approach contextualizes the press institutions by examining ownership, staffing and news practices of the Natal press, develops a critique of 'news' and news pictures, examines the different sorts of coverage offered, as well as evaluates journalistic norms.

Adendorff discusses newspaper cartoons as complex forms of interactions that presuppose considerable background knowledge on the part of the readers. Using concrete examples, he stresses the interaction that must occur between the cartoonist and the reader for meaning to be conveyed.

Trust me. I'm a Sceptic.

David Basckin

In this paper, I propose some techniques for dealing with propaganda, especially in terms of state broadcasting and television. None of them is new, but their combination offers the viewer or listener a pragmatic battery of self-directed truth-determining methods. By way of introduction, let me list the topics with which I shall deal: firstly, I will discuss Freud's concept of manifest and latent content. While in its original form this concept refers to the interpretation of dreams, in this paper I will examine the usefulness of transferring it to the interpretation of media. Expanding the point, I will also comment on the usefulness - or otherwise - of applying classical psychoanalytic concepts to the study of media. Secondly, I will talk about ideology and what this may mean in the current situation. Thirdly, I will turn to systematic doubt or scepticism, arguing in favour of its practice by those on the receiving end of the media. Fourthly, and perhaps finally, I will review the Foucauldian distinction between knowledge and power, during which I will labour the point that truth and power are seldom, if ever, the same thing. The paper concludes with a summary in which the various ideas are synthesised into a coherent and pragmatic package. It is hoped that the package of critical tools that results will allow people to marshal their critical abilities in the face of the media onslaught, so ensuring that they remain in control of their own ideas, values and feelings. In short, the purpose of this paper is to provide some ways of thinking about the media so that the passivity which is inherent to the television viewers' role is not only undermined, but undermined by the viewers themselves.

It is something of a truism that state media serve the interests of those in power. The hegemonic control of television in South Africa by the central government, has been a continuous feature since the late introduction of television to this country in the mid nineteen seventies. While it has been argued that every single aspect of the SABC's programming serves ideological and propagandistic ends, let it be sufficient for the purposes of this paper to focus on the news programmes of which Network is the main example. The ruling group in South Africa has never been comfortable with dissenting views. Consequently, the systematic conflation of news and commentary has been the dominant mode of information presentation on the SABC. The importance with which this was held by the State is underlined by its insistence on a television news monopoly. Until very recently, the charter under which M-Net was allowed to broadcast, expressedly forbade the presentation of news, so ensuring that the only television news that reached the mass audience, had been projected through the very special truth filters of Auckland Park. Under PW Botha, the control of the SABC was singularly and crudely one-sided. But since

February this year, a certain loosening up has been experienced. Suddenly the media demons of the past are not only quoted on Network, but are even welcome on chat shows to put their anti-Pretoria, anti-apartheid, anti-police, anti-army, anti-emergency, anti-capitalism points of view. Some commentators in the print media have welcomed this as a sign of incipient democracy. But is this necessarily the case? What happens in the editing room? How complete - or contextually accurate - are the televised statements of Pretoria's recently unbanned enemies?

Moving along the speculative trail now, what is going to appear on our television screens when the transfer of political power has taken place? Only a cynic will expect it to be worse. And only Polyanna will expect it to be better. But will the truth content necessarily be any higher than we experience at the moment? Apart from hope and faith, what intellectual tools do we - the television watching masses - have to interpret the real meaning of the information provided by the broadcasting authorities not only now, but in the near future? It is a truism that ideology and truth are not necessarily identical. Consequently, when the change in power comes, with it will come a new dominant ideology - an ideology that will be propagated by the State controlled media.

Before discussing Freud's concept of manifest and latent content, let me emphasise as strongly as I can that attempts to impose psychoanalytic concepts onto the interpretation of the media are misguided. A dream is an intrapsychic creation with a meaning unique to the dreamer. In polar contrast, the media are social constructions with purposes shared by those who control or contribute to them. Nevertheless, with this proviso clearly understood, let me say that one concept from Freud's interpretation of dreams is of use in this context. Freud distinguished between the manifest dream - the series of events that made up the dream as the dreamer recalls it; and the latent dream - the series of unconscious associations and symbols that provide the meaning of the dream. Freud's interest in dreams lay exclusively in his belief that they provide a partial gateway to the unconscious. The unconscious is that part of the mind which contains repressed memories and the surging instinctual forces of sexuality and aggression. The struggle on the part of the repressed material to become conscious is resisted by the unconscious. Nevertheless, repressed material makes itself conscious via devious channels. One of the channels is the dream. However, such is the power of the unconscious that the meaning of the dream is obscured to the dreamer, requiring the interpolation of the analyst as hermeneut to achieve realization. Part of the hermeneutic skill lies in the insight that the latent part of the dream is considerably larger in content and denser in meaning than the narrative flow that makes up the manifest dream. Consequently, it can be argued that the same structures - manifest and latent - apply to the media.

The news story as broadcast can be seen in terms of its manifest content, which is not only the way many viewers see it, but is also just the way the broadcasters intend it to be seen. But for the critical viewer, questions about the latent content need to be addressed. What has been left out of the story? How has the sequence of the narrative been juggled? Whose interests are served by the story being broadcast? And whose interests are denied by the very same process? What symbolic associations have the producer and interviewer inserted into the visual imagery? How is language selected to create a specific set of feelings in the hearts and bellies of the viewers?

It is concepts like this that make up the latent part of the radio broadcast, television episode or newspaper story. And it is to the latent part that the minds of critical readers and viewers must direct themselves.

Next, why scepticism? Scepticism is an important tool of rationality. It is reason's defence against dogma. While not quite the same concept, ideology and dogma share some important characteristics. One could argue that dogma is the closed set of opinions that pertain to the holders of an ideology. When the locus of political power shifts, ideologies change too. Not that any ideologies necessarily mirror the truth, but their opposition to each other imbues them with an emotional validity sustained by the injuries endured by the powerless under the previous political dispensation. It follows that compensatory mechanisms come into play, designed to rectify the false dogma of the past regime by relentless exposure to the received truths of the new. Such truth-mongering becomes the dominant function of State-run media regardless of whom is in power. And it is against such received truth or truths that systematic scepticism offers its protection.

As Foucault has noted, there is no linear relationship between truth and power. To simplify his position, one could say that truth and knowledge become abstracted by rulers to concretize their hold on power. While Foucault has used medicine, psychiatry and penology as bases for his ideas, it requires very little effort to extrapolate his point of view to the media.

Consequently, it is clear that the media - and State-run television in particular - provide the mass audience with the appearance of truth, and not with truth itself. Despite the apparent concreteness of the television image, it remains at all times a social construction, informed by the dogma of the ruling caste. So that we, the audience, can retain our democratic rights to criticism, this paper urges the practice of scepticism to ensure our escape from the passivity and social isolation that television-watching so frequently imposes. ■

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Critical Cinema & the Reality of Reflection

John Higgins

> It's because film is easy to understand that it's difficult to explain. (Metz 1983, pp. 74)

Film is all too easy to understand. We usually see it and understand it immediately, all too immediately. It cuts off, in its usual duration of an hour and a half and in the usual conditions of public screening, any space for response. When we go to the cinema we can't stop the film, we can't say 'Hang on, I want to see that bit again', we are taken in by the film, we watch it through. It's easy to understand from that position, from that uninterrupted experience. However, when we begin to analyse film, and take some critical distance from that usual experience, then film becomes difficult to explain, difficult to find a way of explaining. And an important component of that difficulty for the understanding of film is the absolute necessity to slow it down, to see it again and again, to analyse it and to analyse it before we begin our attempt at explaining it, our attempt to interpret a particular film.

Discussion and analysis of film exist in at least three major forms. The first, and the most common, is simply the practice of casual film reviewing: something we can read every day in the newspapers, and in the weekly and glossy press. As a form of analysis, it is severely restricted by its almost total reliance on the pre-publicity provided by the cinema industry itself, and the relations of patronage through advertising between the newspapers and distribution companies. The status of the reviewer is usually reduced to that of the imaginary 'common viewer', thus inhibiting the potentially educative and critical role that discussion of film can fulfill. A second form - and one widely variable in its seriousness and interest - we can broadly call film history: the history of the cinema as industry, of its technology, of its stars, of its major companies, from coffee-table book to academic monograph, from part of the publicity machine to contributions to the factual basis for a historical and critical appraisal of cinema.

Such studies can be both valuable and interesting, but their concern with a history of facts about the cinema tends to exclude from the outset any questions concerning the analysis, understanding and interpretation of either film as a whole or particular filmic narratives. It is the concern with issues of interpretation and analysis which forms the object of the third, and newly emergent, form of discourse on film. This third form is then the theoretical analysis of film as a specific signifying practice, the practice of film interpretation; and it is with that third relatively new form that I shall be concerned today. And I believe that we should make this third form a focal point for our discussions at this conference.

Film is easy to understand, but it's difficult to explain. One of the ways of understanding film, but refusing to explain it, refusing to interpret it, is to treat it as it was treated yesterday by Professor Chapman: to treat it as analogous to a lower form of literature, as mass entertainment, as something that can be discussed within the confines of a theatrical genre - melodrama or farce. To begin your discussion of film by putting it into literary categories is to refuse to analyse the specificity of film itself, is to remain on that level of an easy understanding and to refuse to move towards the difficulties of explaining film, of interpreting film. It was a refusal which was all the more shocking given Chapman's apparent commitment to 'reading all the signs'. To read the signs of cinema, it is necessary to accept film as a specific signifying practice, which means for a start accepting that film is not the novel, is not theatre, is not painting, and cannot be assimilated to them.

Chapman suggested that 'It doesn't matter if you haven't seen the film'. I think it does matter whether you have seen the film, and matters even more exactly how you have seen the film, whether you see it from the position of an easy understanding, a reductive analysis, or whether you try and cope with that difficulty, the specific difficulties of explaining the film text, of slowing down its operations enough to read how that text is constructed. To read film in terms of a content analysis is ultimately to reduce it to the repetition of an example of bourgeois ideology, a repetition no less vitiating in its political consequences than the liberal humanist reduction in which all texts become the expression of universal values. All texts can equally be read as the expression of a universal and unchanging human nature and its values, or an unchanging ideology of oppression; but to read them in that way, I would argue, is precisely not to read them. Thus for all Professor Chapman's insistence on reading 'all the signs', I would submit that his analysis of the film *Running on Empty* was disabled by a refusal to actually read the text of the film. His assertions concerning the 'meaning' of the film finally remained unsupported by any real textual evidence. It remained a 'reading' which belongs in the category of an 'easy understanding'.

In this paper, I have two broad aims in mind. The first is to give a demonstration of film interpretation in practice, an attempt to move from that easy understanding to the specific difficulties of explaining the generation of meanings in film, deploying some of the basic concepts of this new mode of analysis; and the second is to offer a brief account of the emergence of this new practice of film interpretation in the move away from what I shall call the naive realist view of film which belongs to its prehistory towards a critical account of cinema as signifying practice.

From Prehistory to History

The analysis and interpretation of film has made an extraordinary shift in the past twenty-five years or so - and this conference in Durban helps to mark that shift. It can be described as a move from the prehistory to the history of film analysis. I borrow the terms the French tradition in the history of science (so distinct from the Anglo-American tradition) represented by the work of Georges Canguilhem and Gaston Bachelard, and, perhaps most notoriously, by Louis Althusser.

Bachelard distinguishes between scientific knowledge and what he refers to as 'connaissance commune' - commonsense knowledge. For Bachelard and Althusser, scientific knowledge and commonsense knowledge are totally and necessarily distinct. A 'science' is founded at the moment when an 'epistemological break' occurs; this 'epistemological break' creates a new object for thought, scientific because it corresponds to and is produced by a coherent set of theoretical concepts. This essentially rationalist (as opposed to the Anglo-American empiricist) notion of science locates scientificity in the concept of the object of thought. What is it that effectively divides off the commonsense understanding of film from its 'scientific' conceptualisation?

One way of understanding this distinction is to refer to the different positions adopted by the ordinary spectator of film and the film analyst. Christian Metz (1983 pp. 56) has written of these as parallel positions. The spectator's reading of a film is concerned above all to 'make sense' of that film - to achieve the position of understanding which the film narrative attempts to inscribe for the spectator. The analyst's reading of a film is a meta-reading; it is concerned primarily with the understanding and analysis of that inscription. The film analyst (or film semiologist, in Metz's terms) attempts to understand how the film is understood; how the film seeks to position the spectator so that the film can be understood. While the spectator reads the narrative of the film, the analyst reads its narration, its address, its construction of that narrative which is entertained by and which entertains the spectator. The history of film analysis proper begins when its object becomes that process of narration.

This shift in the position of the reader of the film from spectator to analyst clearly involves a significant change in the object of analysis. What are the conceptual implications of this shift? Where might we locate the point of 'epistemological rupture'? What is crucial here is exactly how film for the analyst becomes an object of knowledge distinct from film as the object of commonsense understanding. This distinction bears most heavily on the question of the realism of the film medium itself, on the acceptance or denial of the quasi-ontological realism of the filmic medium.

Things are There: Naive Realism

Two remarks by two equally eminent filmmakers can serve as the slogan for, and as introduction to, the paradigm or problematic which I shall qualify as the 'prehistory' of film analysis, a prehistory in which there is no distance between the ordinary spectator and the film analyst. The first is a remark made by the Italian 'neo-realist' director, Roberto Rossellini in an interview given in 1959. 'Les choses sont là,' remarked Rossellini, 'pourquoi les manipuler?' (cit Metz, 1971, pp. 49), which I shall translate and amplify as 'Things are simply there; why should we need to manipulate them?' The camera - the whole apparatus of cinema - is seen as a neutral medium of transmission, the camera simply records what is there. The best cinema is that which refuses to do anything else. Again, in another significant amplification of that position, the Italian director, Pier Paulo Pasolini asserts: 'The cinema is a language which expresses reality with reality.' (Cit. Heath 1981a pp. 106) But it is worth quoting in full the passage from which Pasolini's remark is drawn:

> By studying the cinema as a system of signs, I came to the conclusion that it is a non-conventional and non-symbolic language unlike the written or spoken

> language and expresses reality not through symbols but via reality itself; if I want to express that tree I express it through itself. The cinema is a language which expresses reality with reality. So the question is: what is the difference between the cinema and reality? Practically none. I realised that the cinema is a system of signs whose semiology corresponds to possible semiology of the system of signs of reality itself. So the cinema forced me to remain always at the level of reality, right inside reality: when I make a film I am always in reality, among the trees and among people...there is no symbolic or conventional filter between me and reality, as there is in literature. So in practice the cinema was an explosion of my love for reality.

One reading of this passage places it squarely on the side of Rossellini's naive empiricism: 'if I want to express that tree I express it through itself' - it is as if there were no distance between the filmic image of the tree and the tree itself; the cinematic 'sign' is so close to the real object itself that there is practically no difference between the cinema and reality. In practice, 'the cinema was an explosion of my love for reality'; 'when I make a film I am always in reality, among the trees and among people...there is no symbolic or conventional filter between me and reality'.

It is indeed on the question of this 'symbolic or conventional filter' that the naive realists of the prehistory of film analysis agree. What concerns them most of all is, in fact, the question of ideology. Film is prized because it seems to be able to resist ideology and it is around the question of the ideological implications of montage that the naive realists define themselves. Perhaps the foremost exponent of these views was the French film critic, Andre Bazin.

Bazin, in his famous essay, 'The Evolution of the Language of Cinema' (Bazin 1967), begins with a distinction between 'those directors who put their faith in the image and those who put their faith in reality' . The former use the resources of montage in order to 'impose [their] interpretation of an event on the spectator' while for the latter - for instance Stroheim - reality simply 'lays itself bare'. For Bazin, the most important event in the evolution of the language of cinema was the advent of deep focus. For Bazin, deep focus virtually abolishes any distinction between film and reality; it enables the language of cinema to achieve a total transparency, and therefore allows to the spectator a complete freedom of interpretation and complete resistance to any imposition of an interpretation by the director.

In his praise of American director William Wyler's use of deep focus, Bazin insists:

> With the help of deep focus...the spectator has the possibility himself of the final operation of decoupage...William Wyler's deep focus endeavours to be liberal and democratic like the consciousness of the American spectator and the heroes of the film. (Bazin 1980, pp. 44)

In Bazin's account, if the cinema is to be seen as a language, it is a language which (as Pasolini suggests) is much more transparent - much more simply instrumental - than ordinary language or literary language. It is a language purged, ideally at least, of all rhetorical and persuasive effects; and that purging is precisely its value.

And yet, let us complete a quotation already cited. Bazin described the work of 'those who put their faith in reality' as giving us film in which 'reality lays itself bare' - and now we finish the quotation - 'lays itself bare like a subject confessing under the relentless examining of the commissioner of police'. Isn't there perhaps here a trace of violence, of coercion and intimidation -

even if legalised - in the emphasis of the phrase 'relentless'? And, above all, isn't there a presumption that the subject here is guilty, and the commissioner of police knows the truth of that subject, apprehends the subject through his apprehensions of the guilt of the subject? Isn't the commissioner of police the one whose discourse decides the truth? Isn't he the one who knows?

Perhaps these doubts can be better expressed if we pause to examine a further statement of Bazin's, also from the essay on William Wyler:

> To produce the truth, to show the reality, all the reality, nothing but the reality is perhaps an honourable intention, but stated in that way, it is no more than a moral precept. In the cinema there can only be a representation of reality. The aesthetic problem begins with the means of this representation. (Bazin 1980, pp. 41)

This, of course, complicates the problem considerably - indeed, allows for there to be a problem. For our purposes, we can revise this and say that the political problem begins with just this question of representation.

And to seize that problem more securely, we can now turn back to a second reading of the passage taken from Pasolini. Now we might notice a second, again complicating and complicated, series of emphases in Pasolini's argument. For while Pasolini stressed that there was practically no difference between reality and and the cinema, we still have to assess the force of that 'practically none' and here we notice that a more nuanced argument is put, though it is rather denied by most of what the passage is saying. Pasolini continues:

> I realised that the cinema is a system of signs whose semiology corresponds to a possible semiology of signs of reality itself.

To allow that reality itself may be apprehended through a system of signs which a semiology might interpret and analyse - that our apprehension of reality might only be possible through the net of signs - brings back into play the very 'conventional filter' which Pasolini was so insistent on removing or denying. And in this context, we can see that Bazin's homage to American democracy is, of course, itself an ideological gesture - the common equation of liberal ideology with the absence of ideology.

We might even say that there are two fundamental questions of cinema: the question of realism, and the question of ideology, and that these two questions are profoundly related. The significant shift from 'prehistory' to 'history' is from the idea and the defence of cinema as an almost ontologically realist medium, to the question of how cinema achieves such a powerful effect of realism. That such an effect is an illusion, and therefore always a question of the 'manipulation' or positioning of the spectator is a knowledge which the naive realist position sought to deny and to repress; but one which, as we have seen, constantly returns to haunt even the naive realist theory of a Pasolini or a Bazin. Bazin's own remark, that in the cinema 'there can only be a representation of reality', helps then to locate the break with the commonsense definition of film, and with the prehistory of film analysis.

The naive realist position has then in a sense to deconstruct. Cinema doesn't express reality with reality, in cinema there can only be a representation of reality and until we begin to understand the means of that representation we cannot begin to cope with the politics of the image. And here I'd like to raise one or two questions concerning community video in response to the very interesting paper given by Jacqueline Maingard yesterday. (Maingard, 1991)

Community video attempts to empower those who do not have access to images. It speaks in the name of the repressed authenticity of their experience. But I would like to pose a question about this authenticity, having seen some of the excerpts from videos yesterday. The question is: But what if the oppressed also tend to think in the images of their own oppression, tend to see themselves through the oppressor's eye? How can an authentic representation be created?

Perhaps I can borrow an example from discussion with FAWO's guest, Martha Rosler. The problem of representation which I am trying to articulate can I think be seen from this example. How can one take a photograph - an authentic photograph - of life in a township? One problem becomes immediately clear - to take a photograph, to represent reality, to put it in a frame, is usually to aestheticise reality, to beautify it. It's virtually impossible to take a photograph which doesn't just look pretty. Even the lake of stagnant water in a township, once photographed, glistens with an aesthetic beauty. What image could be taken which would express the authentic experience of township life?

The point I am trying to make is that it isn't easy to represent the reality of apartheid. It's not as simple as handing over the camera to the oppressed and saying, Look, things are there, just you take pictures of what you see. There is a whole work in relation to existing systems of representation which needs to be done, and perhaps even needs to be done first. Or that is the question I want to raise. Are we even near to beginning to understand how we could begin to contest the system of representation as well as to redistribute access to the means of representation? I'm not sure. But in order to do that we must raise that question of the politics of representation, and not ignore it and to this end I think we need to focus on another term besides that of 'third cinema'. That term is critical cinema.

It was interesting to see in the presentation yesterday that the name and the work of the Swiss film-maker Jean-Luc Godard was relegated to to the category of second cinema, the cinema of the author, the cinema of the artist, with all the bourgeois self-indulgence such a classification implies. For me, this is not a classification I can completely accept. Godard is of course a great artist, and his work has been self-indulgent at times; but I believe that his work has also been concerned, perhaps more than that of any other film-maker of his generation, with an attention to the politics of the image without which a critical and politically progressive cinema cannot develop. Godard's work has attempted to articulate and to embody a response to the naive realist positions which we have examined so far, and I should like now to turn to a few critical quotations drawn from that work.

The Reality of Reflection

The first is taken from the film *Vent d'Est*:

> Ce n'est pas une image juste, c'est juste une image -
> This is not a just image, it's just an image,

or, more fully,

> This is not a correct image, it's only an image;

the second,

> Cinema is not the reflection of reality, but the reality of that reflection.

The first challenges that naive realist assumption that the image itself can stand alone as true, as a correct image. To assert on the contrary that an image is only an image, just an image, is to promote a scepticism in relation to the image, to what it shows, to what it tells - and ultimately to encourage a move into the analysis and intepretation of what it is that the image wishes to show or to tell, with the emphasis now on the telling, on the construction of meaning. The reality of that reflection then refers in full to all the ideological implications of that telling, of that construction of meaning and thus leads to a third point Godard is keen to make:

> In every image we must know who speaks. (MacCabe, 1980, pp. 111-112).

This insistence on knowing who speaks can be read as a rejection of the transparency of 'film language', even the possibility of such a transparency and neutrality; and foregrounds instead the necessarily rhetorical aspects of film: its constant desire to position the spectator, to persuade the spectator to accept the cohesion of the film's narrative, to inscribe the spectator into the meanings which the film offers. Godard's own practice constantly seeks to dislocate that positioning, to reject that inscription, by revealing the processes of that positioning and inscription, by foregrounding the rhetorical force of film. It is, in that sense, a critical cinema, a cinema which performs some of the same operations as the film analyst. It is a cinema which attempts to place the spectator in the position of the critic by refusing the commonsense position and all its attendant pleasures.

Only when there is such an insistence on the address of film, on its rhetoric, on the fact that someone is always addressing the spectator, that film analysis as such can take place. Central to this has been the abandonment of the search of a singular syntax of film as if it were one language; and the concentration on the multiplicity of film's signifying effects. And this has involved a turn precisely to what Pasolini hinted at: the ways in which film in fact relies on the availability of the existing means of representing reality. If the 'language of film' appeared to be transparent, this transparency was in part generated by the fact that film makes use of a range of existing means of expression which are so familiar to us that we are blind to their operation in film.

The most dangerous images are those which appear to be the most transparent, the most realistic and I return now to my opening comment (see Higgins 1990). It is the tremendous power of the film image that we must seek as film educators to combat, and we can do that first of all by slowing down our viewing in order to understand the tremendous realistic power of cinema as an effect. We must understand how that effect is generated and I'd like to turn now to a practical example of how in fact that powerful narrative realism is generated through the deployment of film's five means of expression.

Means of Expression

We now number five basic means of expression available in recorded noise, recorded musical sound, and writing. Although these have to be separated out for analysis in an initial moment, the aim of analysis should be to examine their integrated impact.

The first of these, and the most striking, is the moving photographic image. Projected at twenty-four frames per second, the film image - larger than life - can give an extraordinary sense of reality - as the audiences to the first Méliàs films remarked, startled, 'even the leaves move'. On this level of analysis, such features as the type of shot (close-up, medium shot, long-distance or panoramic shot), its place in a sequence (as beginning or end, as repetition), all have a signifying force (which I shall bring out in analysis of the sequence from *The Shining*).

The second is recorded phonetic sound - the dialogue or narration. Literary students may often focus on the content of what is said, rather than the total context in which something is said (to whom, how it is angled, etc...).

The third - and often neglected - element is recorded noise. This is usually relegated to simply a support for the realist effect of film (doors slamming, cars hooting, guns shooting etc); but I shall show that even recorded noise has or can have an important signifying effect.

The fourth element - and one likely to be noticed by most spectators, certainly at climactic or tense moments in the film, is the musical score and sound-track - now often marketed as a distinct commodity of its own. And the fifth element is simply the use of written language in the film - the close-up of letters from one character in the film to another, or, decisively for *The Shining*, a view of Jack's typescript.

Let us now turn to the analysis of a sequence - the opening sequences in fact - from Stanley Kubrick's film *The Shining* in order to see how contemporary film analysis can work in practice.

Perhaps all in all the most important thing to recall about film is its speed. At twenty-four frames a second, things happen very quickly. And it is as if the film is constantly afraid of being forgotten, and therefore is constantly drawing attention to its meaning, reconfirming them, over-determining them. So that the powerful effect of realism which film achieves must never be taken as simply a constituent element of the medium itself - film's natural possession, its essential attribute, a part of its ontological being - but always as the construction of this effect, its positioning of ourselves as spectators of the film.

We can view the success of that spectatorship as dependent, in a certain sense, on our memory of the film. And as Stephen Heath has remarked, 'Without narrative, the memory of a film fails us' (1981d, pp. 171). The task of the film is to not let us forget the direction of its movement, to secure us in and through its movement in time, its flickering. Just as the 24 frames a second enables our vision to constitute continuity through persistence of vision, so does the narrative help to constitute an ongoing memory of the film for the spectator. A great many of the effects of what we shall be analysing in this opening section of Kubrick's film is precisely the explanation of that narrative, of the work of narrative to keep us in place, of the securing of the spectator.

When does a film begin? When should analysis begin? Of course, at the very beginning of the film.

Title Sequence

This initial sequence - the title-sequence of the film - lasts some 2 minutes. Our first reaction - as spectator - is simply that this title-sequence gives us the name of the film, its actors, and some idea of the location and setting of the film. But when we analyse the sequence, we see already that the work of the film - its work at the construction of meanings, at the weaving of a narrative, already begins.

The sequence is made up of eight shots, each of around ten to twenty seconds duration. The first shot - of the river and mountains lasts some fifteen seconds and at first it seems to carry no signification, no narration. It is simply a shot of nature, an example of cinema language at its most transparent - at the very most saying, 'Here is nature, here is the setting of the film'. In addition to this physical location, the musical sound track helps to establish the mood or genre of the film as a whole: the music is heavy, awesome, monotonous; the film is a horror film.

But perhaps the most important aspect of this shot is the way it moves, the position it offers to the spectator. There are two points here: the first is the speed of the movement, a hurtling through space; and the second is the angle of the shot - which begins with but moves away from a true or flat horizon, and ends up tilted. What is the signifying effect of this? A certain disjuncture: the point of view we are occupying is a non-human point-of-view, it is too fast to be human, it is tilted out of the true of the human subject. So already there is a certain disturbance here, a disturbance in fact of how we might expect to see.

We are hurtled in fact into the second shot, again a shot of some fifteen seconds and once more, a shot which disorients the spectator. What are we seeing? At first, we simply fade into a pattern of shapes - and then, at some point in those fifteen seconds we recognise the pattern as that of a forest cut by a winding road, and on that road, miniscule, a car. What is stressed is the non-humanness of this view: its scale is too vast, the car too small, a car seen from what can only be a non-human view.

This non-human aspect begins, in the third shot, to be taken up in the sound-track. Up until now, the music, though threatening, has been recognisable as music, but now that regular pattern is disrupted by a series of whistlings and shriekings which in their non-musicality also signify a non-humanness.

This new element intrudes on the sound-track as the camera focuses in on the car so that the effect is that the car or rather its occupants are under threat from something outside, something alien, something other. The fourth shot now focuses more closely on the car and from what is for a few seconds a possible human viewpoint (that of an overtaking car) as Jack Nicholson's name comes onto the screen and rests over the car. We would be right to guess that the driver of the vehicle is Jack Torrance/ Nicholson. But the car is not overtaken, the camera takes us instead over the roadside, over the cliffside as the soundtrack pushes towards a crescendo of the inhuman - and then first the title of the film itself appears *The Shiming*; and then the name of the young actor Danny Lloyd, who plays the role of Danny Torrance in the film, rolls up. We would be right to associate then this unnatural music with Danny - he is after all the bearer of the 'shining', the film's name for a broad spectrum of telepathic powers. So that we see even in these early seconds of the film a number of associations being made, a certain narrative network established, as we grow to associate the driver of the car with Jack and the existence of a relation between the shining, Danny and the non-human, the unnatural, the threatening.

All roads, of course, lead to a destination, and the sixth, seventh and eight shots take us to the end of the journey, and what must be the location of the inhuman and the unnatural - the hotel on the snowy mountain slopes, the Overlook.

We can already see the emergence of one major and structuring opposition in the film as a whole in this title sequence. That is the opposition, and a threatening opposition, between the world of human culture (the road which leads to the hotel and the car which drives along it) and the world of nature. Nature dwarfs human culture, threatens it, threatens to overwhelm it just as the non-musical sounds threaten to overwhelm the musical track, itself already threatening. The film plays on this primordial opposition: the opposition between a primordial cannibalism and society, fought out here in the family as psychic cannibalism which threatens to dissolve the identities of the families members as Jack's is dissolved. It is finally an opposition between nature and culture within the family, between a violent and patriarchal authority which goes back to the mythic origins of human culture in the violence of the primal horde.

The Interview

The terms of this opposition are picked up and given more body in the sequence which follows, the first narrative sequence proper of the film, 'The Interview'. This sequence lasts approximately seven minutes, and can be divided into two alternating sections - two in the hotel itself, and two in the family home. I have only time to discuss one or two points of interest. I shall concentrate on the ways in which the central opposition is picked up and amplified in the recorded phonetic sound - the dialogue between the characters; in the interplay between the recorded phonetic sound and the moving photographic image; and finally, in the recorded sound or noise track.

First, the violence of nature - already suggested in the title sequence - is amplified through the use of personification. In Ullmann's words: 'The winters here can be fantastically cruel and the basic idea [your job as caretaker is]...doing repairs to see that the elements don't get a foothold.' Jack's real problem will be that the cruellest elements - the embodiment of that inhuman Other - will seek their foothold in him. Secondly, the sheer distance of the Overlook from civilization gives it a liminal position. When Ullmann asks 'Have any problem finding us?' and Jack replies that it was no trouble - 'I made the trip in three and a half hours', his reply only confirms that distance and that liminality. The Overlook looks out on each side of the division between violence of nature and the social order of human culture.

More important, this geographical distance is immediately connected with the more problematic psychic space with which the film is concerned. 'The only thing that can become a little trying here over the winter is the tremendous sense of isolation...' observes Ullmann, 'For some people solitude and isolation of itself can become a problem.' Jack insists 'Not for me!' - and Ullmann then makes what is to be the decisive connection between the isolation of the hotel from civilization and Jack's estrangement from his family: 'How about your wife and son? How do you think they'll take to it?'

Jack's pause, before answering 'They'll love it', may already indicate violence towards them in the violence implicit in his speaking for them. This violence, in which the father's word constrains the reality of the whole family, is made more explicit by the next scene into which this section fades. Here Danny and his psychic friend Tommy express their reluctance to go to the Overlook for the winter. Through this direct juxtaposition, Jack's violence - the violence of the hotel itself, the psychic violence at the film's centre - is placed as a patriarchal violence which draws on the mythical image of Saturn eating up his own sons. At this distance from civilization, the family unit itself threatens to become liminal, to return to a more primitive state, to get down to the boundary between the primordial cannibalistic 'family' and the civilized 'modern' family.

I want to next examine one detail which consistently troubled me in this sequence, and which is importantly connected to Jack's place in this primitive patriarchal violence. In the third section of this sequence, Ullmann, Jack Torrance the caretaker to be, and the current caretaker, Bill Waters, are all present on screen as Ullmann explains the nature of Jack's caretaking duties,and the 'tragedy' that overtook a previous winter caretaker, Charles O'Grady. Here I want to concentrate on the importance of the play between the words and images on the screen, having concentrated so far on the words themselves alone (as I said, often the fault of an analyst trained primarily in literature).

Recorded Phonetic Sound:	***Recorded Visual Image:***
I don't suppose anyone told you of the tragedy we had in the winter of 1970?	Ullmann
I don't believe they did	Jack Torrance
Well, my predecessor, Bill Watson, hired a man named Charles O'Grady...	Ullmann
...he killed his family with an axe. Stacked them neatly in one of the rooms of the West Wing. He put both barrels of a shotgun in his mouth.	Jack Torrance
What the oldtimers called cabin fever. Kind of claustrophobic reaction. It happens when people are shut up together over a long period of time.	Ullmann
Pause. *Well, that's quite a story.*	Jack Torrance

What interested me here initially was the shot of the caretaker, Bill Watson. Although his presence is acknowledged by both Ullmann and Jack in a number of sidelong glances, he remains silent throughout the entire 23 shots which constitute this segment of the film. And of these 23, this is the only one in which he features.

The other twenty-two shots are a classic shot/exchange shot sequence in which Ullmann and Torrance talk to each other, with the words of each usually carrying over into the shot of the other to ensure continuity. The only shot of Jack when he does not speak is when he hears of the O'Grady family murder. Clearly this works to show Jack's emotional response to this news; but is there perhaps another level of signification? I think so.

The shot of Jack not talking matches or echoes the shot of Bill Watson. The shot of Watson is cut finely on Ullman's words, 'my predecessor'. Watson is of course Jack's predecessor; just as O'Grady was Watson's predecessor... In these two shots, both Jack and Watson occupy the silent space of the Caretaker, the space outside normal human culture, the point at which the violence and disorder of nature threatens social order - in an exact parallel with the way in which the insert shot of Watson threatens or disturbs the conversational and visual exchange between Ullmann and Jack Torrance.

The material reality of that cultural exchange has been emphasised from the start of the film by means of the numerous introductions which secure the identity of each to other. That the identification with the figure of the Caretaker should take place through an undifferentiated and undifferentiating silence comes as no surprise: the threat of undifferentiation which is nature's challenge to culture. 'Make yourself at home, Jack' smiles Ullmann as Jack enters his office for the interview. The problem is precisely that he may do so.

So far we have seen how we can puncture the narrative surface of the film and break its surface tension in order to reveal the richness of connotations which lie beneath or help to constitute its narrative tension through an analysis of the language of the film and of the interplay between language and image in the film. Let us turn now to the signifying effects of the sound or noise track.

Casually, the noise track's only function would seem to be to reinforce the effect of the realism in the film; but I shall argue there that the sound track can also have a semiotic density to it. I choose three examples from the first few moments of the film.

As Jack enters the hotel lobby at the 'beginning' of the film, what do we hear? We hear his footsteps. Of course, we do not always hear the footsteps of a character in a film and when we do there is usually a narrative motivation for hearing them. What might it be here? To my ear, the footsteps echo hollowly, suggesting the vastness of the hotel, its approaching end of season emptiness. Jack's footsteps are almost lost in the hollowness of the space, just as Jack's identity is threatened with loss by the destructive psychic space of the hotel. The footsteps have both a realistic and a semiotic power.

Two further items attract attention as Jack walks towards Ullmann's office. The first is the sound of a telephone and the second the sound of typing. Again, these can be read simply as realistic details; but they can also be interpreted as bearing a semiotic charge. The telephone connects to the idea of communication: the telephone connects the hotel to the outside world, to civilisation; it's cutting off is an important step in the film's action. The second, the sound of typing, also anticipates a crucial series of moments in the film focused on Jack's writing. The silence and isolation of the hotel will give Jack the space he needs to write, he suggests during the interview ('That's just what I need'); but the film will show how what goes wrong. The typing eventually becomes the threatening sound of Jack's madness: the endless repetition of the message ALL WORK AND NO PLAY MAKES JACK A DULL BOY ALL WORK AND NO PLAY MAKES JACK A DULL BOY ALL WORK AND NO PLAY MAKES JACK A DULL BOY ALL WORK AND NO PLAY MAKES JACK A DULL BOY.

In a word, the details of image and sound which we have examined are overdetermined in the classic sense of the term: they enjoy a multiple causality. Such details contribute both to the surface effect of realism in the film, and also to the narration of the film, the flow of its meanings through time. The film analyst sho be constantly aware of this overdeterminatio the key element in the integrated impact whi gives film such a powerful effect - but only e an effect - of realism. In its distinction from t literary, unlike theatre, unlike the novel, it concentrates not so much on character but on meanings. Film engages the generation of meanings through a diversity of semiotic cod which work to produce an effect of the real. F analysis resembles literary analysis only in so as it too must engage with the specific textual of film, woven as it is from the five available codes of expression. In Godard's words again, object of analysis for the film semiologist shou be the reality of reflection. Any reading of film which starts off from film as reflection of realit amounts to no less than a refusal to read film.

The central point of all this: Film studies and media studies may have begun in South Africa but where have they begun? Are we to remain trapped in a prehistory which refuses to recognise the specificity of film, or are we going to develop the concepts of a critical cinema whi I believe would be more adequate to the politics of film and media representation in South Afric today? Only we can decide. ■

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Response to Higgins

Mike Chapman

My paper on teaching the film *Running on Empty* annoyed John Higgins. (It also annoyed John Hookam, who reminded me that we should distinguish between basically good guys like Danny Pope and fascist heroes like Dirty Harry.) Mr Higgins the next day began his own paper by attacking me for reading film in terms of 'content analysis' and, in consequence, reducing it - oh, dear! - to an example of bourgeois ideology. He concluded that my 'assertions' concerning the meaning of the film finally remain unsupported by any 'real textual evidence'.

Readers of my paper will be able to judge for themselves whether I lack textual evidence. For reading the film through a deconstructive (literary?) lens, I make no apology. My purpose was to oppose the idea of film studies as technique, and as stories of sentimental individualism: the emphases given in Transvaal schools to Chariots of Fire. If I downplayed specific codes (eg. the zoom shot) for non-specific codes (in this case, the metaphor of the American family), I was operating within standard theories of film. With a quotation from the theorist Christian Metz providing the epigraph to his paper, Higgins will recognise both kinds of codes that I have just mentioned in Metz's response to the possibilities of film. He will also recall that Metz, who was attracted initially to the ideal of a neutral science of communication, became increasingly aware that every analysis is ultimately responsible to systems of value in the surrounding world.

It follows that we may choose to look at a film in several ways. We can ask what is its basic material, or what techniques have shaped this material, or how do we recognise the significance of filmic conventions, or what value does our experience of the film have in larger aspects of our lives? I suspect that, in South African schools, the last of these questions will be 'universalised' and thus removed from consideration in key local debates. Higgins is entitled to disagree with my approach. He cannot, however, accuse me of refusing to interpret film.

Perhaps, though, our two papers are reminders that, as the resolution of the conference has it, the challenge of film studies will reside neither solely in the deconstruction of stereotypes nor solely in the potential for human enrichment. Instead, we need to investigate dialectics between the demands of human responsibility and the appeals of mass culture. If most films speak perceptually rather than conceptually, this is not in itself necessarily a value judgement, but says something of their distinctive mode. Despite Higgins' comments, I would not condemn a film because its conventions of representation differed from those of a novel. At the same time, film narratives convey messages which tend to endorse rather than question the status quo as depoliticised, fairly conservative and essentially stable. We are entitled to examine the implications of this 'ideology' for particular classes and societies. When film is taught to scholars, for example, I hope questions about the focus of images will prompt ethical questions. Teachers might begin by asking who is pointing the camera: the metropolitan culture or the exotic savage in the jungle? From this deconstructive starting-point - literary or filmic? - our enquiry need not be reductive. It could help us dislodge our habitual ways of seeing, and make us think - as individuals and South Africans. ■

APPROACHING MEDIA STUDIES IN AN ENGLISH CLASSROOM

A Look at the Construction of Sympathy

Joan Ashworth

We as an English teaching community have looked with some suspicion at the 'new' inclusion of media studies in our programme for the reasons that follow.

Firstly, in including this package, nothing was removed (a favourite trick of decision makers who operate outside teaching), so the syllabus once again did a great leap in size.

Secondly, we were suspicious that the film did not warrant the intensive study the novel often requires - many of us view the film or the whole entertainment medium as a shallow even meaningless field. After all we don't choose to study Wilbur Smith, so now why should we have to study *Witness*?

Thirdly, what tools should we as a word-centred community bring to a study of the film? How would we go about it? A number of suggestions have been offered and a number of decisions made: many have chosen to set and study a film for a term as though it were a novel, subjecting it to the traditional methods of critical analysis, using camera angles instead of similes and soundtrack instead of alliteration; still others argue that we should be teaching the process of media, that is we should engage students in creating the artefacts of the media as this will bring true knowledge to bear; still others argue that you examine the forces behind media - essentially capital and politics - to expose media as the agents of the capitalist oppressors.

The book or the written word has always been the centre of the English lesson, because we understood that the word in its written form was the single major cultural experience which could be transported into the classroom, and we understood it to be central to the life experience of the pupils in our care. We as English teachers have had to face up to a changed reality - the book no longer forms a major part of teenage culture; most of the domestic activities of the teenager preclude the act of reading and instead are dominated by sleeping, eating and viewing. Thus we have come to believe that viewing too must be transported into the English classroom as it shapes attitudes and forms opinions and adjusts our perceptions of reality.

The study of media rests almost solely in South Africa in the hands of the language teacher. I would argue then that, for as long as it remains in the main language curriculum, it must be informed by the philosophy of language teaching.

Thus one of my central concerns about the study of media is the prevalent insistence on labelling it as though it were a separate entity with a mind and life force of its own - this seems to imply that it is not part of the English programme at all, but a subject in its own right. It is this insistence on labelling that has led to so much teacher anxiety as it seems to us that we need skills and understandings that are not essentially language in nature.

It is my intention to show how the study of media is easily incorporated into the English programme provided that it is subsumed or informed by the principles of main language teaching.

I would like to begin then by arguing that we have been teaching media since the 1970s when the teaching of advertising and propaganda became essential fixtures in the English programme; we were also involved from about 1972 in the teaching of newspapers; and the late 1970s saw the introduction of the study of film. I can remember 10 years ago exploring a film called *Black Christmas* with my pupils in an attempt to analyse with them their responses to the horror and/or thriller genre.

I see the teaching of language as having one single methodology: we are concerned with the way in which meaning is made. It is my contention that meaning lies in the 'flow of sympathy' established within any particular language situation. All language lessons begin with a stimulus, be it a piece or pieces or text: a novel, a poem, a play, an advert, a piece of propaganda; and I see it as crucial that the lesson is focussed on the act of engagement with the text, rather than an apparently objective and academic study of the text itself. Pupils and teachers need to explore the way in which meaning is made by the forces within the textual material, the situation in which the encounter with the text takes place and the life experiences the pupils and teachers bring to this engagement.

In the teaching of the novel, for example, meaning is made through the sympathy that is generated between the text and the reader. Pupils in any study of the novel examine the way in which the novelist sets about constructing his novel in order to manipulate and persuade the reader. Thus the focus of the English lesson is not on the content of the work but on its power.

I would argue then that this is the same principle that should be brought to bear on a study of media in the English classroom. I consider the central device of media is the manufacture and manipulation of sympathy; this then seems to place the study of media well within the English programme.

The best way I can support this thesis is through illustration from a media studies programme I have incorporated into my own teaching programme.

The school I teach in is a large white government school in Durban, occupied in the main by rather placid middle-class boys. As I go through the programme I will indicate some of the difficulties I encountered.

The programme began with a picture. The picture was taken from the cover of *Leadership* magazine and featured a dreamy looking Nelson Mandela. I opened the lesson by asking how the pupils responded to this picture of Mandela, offering them only parts of the picture in question. Knowing them particularly well, I was prepared for a negative response; I realised their resistance to the ANC (this picture dates from March 1990) would result in their refusal to respond to the picture in the way that the photographer had intended. I was not however prepared for the extent of the violence of that response. My purpose in showing the photograph was to show how the media set out to construct images which attempt to adjust or reshape reality. Mandela, who only a few months before this picture was taken, was for many a representative of the national enemy, is projected in a very different light in this photograph. I knew they would be resistant to this new 'light' and hoped to show how the media can only have an effect if the audience is willing, for no matter how passive the receivers are, they bring to the act of viewing a life experience that must affect their willingness to receive images. I was confronted by a class divided within itself - between those who were intrigued by a study of the picture as a construct or stage set, and those whose hatred of the man refused to allow them even a comparatively objective study of his photograph.

The second exercise involved two pictures offered firstly as separate entities. The first is a picture of a black classroom, filled with weeping black children. I asked the pupils how they responded to or interpreted this photograph. In the main they read this photograph in terms of their own school experience - these children were unhappy to be at school. The second photograph showed a group of Maritzburg College boys viewing a sports match - since these are my school's traditional enemies, it was laughed at and comments about their silly hats were passed. However, in the original source of the pictures, they had been juxtaposed. When I offered them together, the reactions changed. I was attempting to show how meaning is made through context - by positioning an unhappy, disadvantaged group against a disciplined, rather satisfied highly privileged group, comment is being made about the South African school system. It was at this moment that I again ran into some trouble with the pupils who attempted to collapse the lesson with comments such as 'Well, they burn schools, don't they?', but by now they were a little uneasy with this comment.

The third exercise was similar to the first - it too was built on a contrast between two pictures, and once again I offered them separately and then engaged them in exploring the new meaning made when these pictures were juxtaposed. The pictures are firstly a photograph of an ANC rally in Soweto, and secondly one of an AWB rally in Pretoria. The contrast in political image projected by these pictures is quite stunning, and the comments being made about each political party through this contrast opens up some very interesting discussion.

The pupils, in this example, were far more willing to examine both the artefacts and their responses to them objectively, so this was a particularly effective exercise.

The fourth exercise involved a series of advertisements. The pupils were surprised by them since the only lessons on advertising they have been exposed to are adverts for products. These were adverts for companies and when asked for their responses to these adverts they had some difficulties in coming to recognise their responses in any way - finally I had to ask how they felt about the companies involved and then they were able to identify a response. However this had already led them to an understanding of the purpose of the adverts which I had hoped they would reach in other ways. We then engaged in a discussion as to how these adverts set up or constructed those responses and finally concluded with a debate as to the integrity of the images being projected by these companies.

My purpose in this exercise was to show how advertising can be used, often quite ruthlessly, to affect not only our responses to the object being advertised but to our whole perception of the social reality in which we find ourselves. Most of these advertisements purported to show big business involved in constructing a 'new' South Africa. Harmony, enterprise, mutual trust and freedom were key motifs in the advertisements and the students had some difficulty in separating the motif from the company - in objectifying the advertisements in any way.

My concluding exercise was a cut from a film called *Nico*. In selecting this film I was guided by my interests in the pupils' own viewing. I was affected in my choice by two concerns: firstly, there is an explosion in the production of films which justify stepping outside the law to wreak vengeance because the law is portrayed as weak, or corrupt, or impotent; secondly, it seems to me, the phenomenon of watching violence, albeit at one remove, as an act of pleasure is remarkably perverse, particularly so when one considers the numbers of violent films adolescents watch. I do understand that in the act of viewing we all bracket out reality; I am also aware that we know when we are watching second-hand violence that it is second-hand; but I am concerned that regular and repeated viewing of violence might result in that bracket growing increasingly weak. Many pupils I teach watch 10 videos a week, and most, if not all, of them star the Rambo or Conan type of hero.

The cut is comprised of three scenes whose juxtaposition ultimately leads to the justification of the explosion into violence that finally takes place. That this act of violence is illegal, and that the 'cop' could be prosecuted for it is never confronted. The audience is led, through a number of constructs and stage sets, to cheer and enjoy the violence that finally takes place. The pupils and I watched the clip and I only stopped it when I heard the cheers and laughter as the hero rendered one of the villains impotent. I asked them why they were so happy. I suggested that they might have been caught in a trap set for them by the producers/directors. Then we went back over the previous scenes and looked at how our sympathies had been deliberately manipulated. We examined the choice of hero - why it had to be a man, young and good-looking; we considered his clothing - and in particular its colour (in the church he is dressed rather like a modern angel, in the bar like a modern ninja); we considered the use of setting - for example, when we first meet him he is in a church, looking significantly sensitive and gentle, thus he is established for us as a spiritual, good man (perhaps even a saviour?); we then examined the setting for the concluding scene - a seedy bar, peopled by degenerates and corrupts; even here our hero is polite, sensitive, gentle and concerned - he is made for example to be the only person not using foul language; despite endless provocation he is controlled; only when these bad guys really step out of line does he critically injure them and destroy the bar.

This was a particularly successful exercise as the pupils enjoyed the film cut and were quite happy to re-examine its values and their own. The lesson concluded with their justification for their initial enjoyment - they knew it was not 'real' and therefore had suspended all moral judgements. This in itself became a subject for debate. From this point the pupils were encouraged to look back on their responses to the first lessons and were now able to objectify far more easily their reactions to the sets of pictures that had so distressed them.

In conclusion, I felt that the cross-media approach had been effective as pupils in the main were enabled to view media more objectively and more critically. In addition, they were encouraged to use those skills that they had developed in other language exercises, that range from comprehension to the exploration of a poem or a novel. ■

Telling tales - considerations of narrative

Jeanne Prinsloo

Historically the media has only gradually been considered a serious or worthy field of study within education. This acceptance of the relevance of media has been characterized at least in its early development by a response of fear or suspicion of the pleasures that the media have offered. Formal acceptance of media as part of the educational agenda is a fairly recent stage of education in S. Africa as the synopses of the different initiatives by the different educational departments show. This we need to understand as clearly only the beginning of the difficult task of creating and establishing Media Education as a distinctive mode of enquiry. This is a difficult task because we need to develop and direct this area of study. Educationists and teachers have to arrive at the realization that no form of media education (or for that matter, any area of education) is ever neutral and the approach to media education at this volatile juncture of S. Africa's education is crucial. It is a crucial issue for it might provide us with some of the tools with which we can approach the enormous problems we will be inheriting in post-apartheid education.

For these reasons it is imperative that we consider the precedents of other countries in order to avoid those pitfalls that they have indeed experienced. The British precedents suggest that we move cautiously in certain areas.

Initially media education was characterized by a concern with the effects of the media - a rather uneasy approach because this attention paid to media was a response on account of the evil effects attributed to the media. This attitude to popular cultural forms (perhaps because a wider public is granted access to ideas or pleasures that were previously the domain of a small privileged group) has been the standard response. It is an approach that understands the media as the villain and the public as the innocent and gullible victim in need of protection from overexposure to issues such as sex and violence (without thought of prejudices such as racism or sexism). This is an approach based on a simplistic cause and effect model of communication, one that has been rejected by students of communication and media.

This approach to teaching about the media appears to have seen its rise in a response to film. It manifested itself as a way of teaching children about the harmful and corrupting pleasures within film. (This concern was also tinged with an unease with Hollywood films and their inherent Americanism which might taint things British.) This attitude to the media has had two effects when it came to teaching about the media. It was deemed necessary to teach students about media in order to innoculate them against these harmful effects of the media and then simultaneously to teach them according to a High Art approach with its emphasis on aesthetic values and discrimination or good taste, according to those values deemed worthy by the cultured elite. This approach tends to concentrate on those media products, (generally art cinema) in order to isolate and study them in terms of their aesthetic qualities, much in the Grand Tradition of Leavis. The argument with this approach is not that it teaches discrimination, but rather the nature of the discrimination that it instils - one that reflects a value system of the culturally elite. One of the problems with this approach has resulted in a very literary approach to film and media study.

This attitude has found its echoes within media education within this country with some emphasis on authorial or art films and a literary approach with poetic interpretations.

Unlike this approach which has been described as a cultural one, the emphasis on vocationalism that has also been fostered in certain educational sectors in Britain has largely ignored the critical edge that informs Media Study. This approach involves a technicist approach with emphasis on skills. This again finds echoes in the practice that has taken root in South Africa. At a post-school level, teaching the 'media' becomes the technicist 'skills' domain of technikons, where the skills of handling equipment and production are dealt with in isolation from any conceptual understanding of media. At a school level, time is sometimes spent on teaching about techniques and their supposed effects. While these are potentially valuable in some way, they remain fragmented areas that need to be contained in a coherent framework that contextualizes and allows flexibility.

In contrast to these approaches, media understanding needs to be grounded in a more holistic approach. All media forms and products need to be considered important areas of understandings. Rather than lamenting or delighting in the impact of particular media forms or products, our realization of the impact of media needs to lead educators to deal with those particularities that are characteristic of media. The issue of the power of the media stems largely from that characteristic shared by most media which is referred to as the 'realist' effect, or the 'window on the world' - that aspect of media that makes it realistic or convincing to the viewer. The chief vehicle for *realism* is arguably the *narrative* form and it is this form that provides an accessible entry into developing critical understandings of diverse media.

Realism

By insisting on dealing with realism, the educator avoids an approach to media education which feeds from a 'common-sense approach': too frequently the ease with which media are understood is conflated with a notion that it is equally easily explained as Metz has so adequately described. Furthermore the approach to studying media that proposes a humanist approach whereby the reader/viewer discusses identification overlooks fundamental elements of media. I do not suggest that identificatory processes are unimportant: to the contrary, they supply one of the crucial motivations for engaging with the media. What I would suggest is that there are more valuable theoretical insights which can initially be engaged with and which should enrich media teaching.

When media forms within popular culture are described as realist, this implies that rather than the media reflecting reality, they construct it. Information is presented as though it offers this 'window on the world', suggesting that what one is offered is an undeniable reflection of reality. Certainly, realism is a complex issue and the intellectual debates that surround it continue. In spite of the potential intricacies of the realist debates, for us as media educationists, what is perhaps of inescapable importance, is the need to lead to this understanding that a media text is 'realistic' not because of any inherent fidelity to an empirical reality, but because it conveys a sense of the real that is convincing to an audience:

> Such a placing of the spectator as observer is dependent on the means of signification which are effaced or denied in the text so that the image may be read as a transparent rendering of 'reality'. (Kuhn 1982)

Realism, then, does not reflect reality but produces it, and can be considered in terms of its content and the social world it provides. Realism is typically narrative in form (in fact Barthes implies it is always narratival) and it is to this dominant vehicle of realism that I devote my attention.

Narrativity

An understanding of narrative would obviously be necessary before suggesting what narrative is not, and to understand its relation to realism. What the study of the narrative can achieve is a deeper understanding of the issue of realism in the media. Before a formal analysis is attempted some general observations about one characteristic of the narrative, namely its 'economy': within a narrative, the diegesis excludes all material that is not relevant to moving the plot forward. All those insignificant time consuming elements of ordinary living disappear. With this in mind, the issue of events or scenarios appearing realistic can be contrasted with how unrealistic in fact the trajectory is.

> A narrative is a chain of events in cause-effect relationship occurring in time...A narrative begins with one situation; a series of changes occurs according to a pattern of causes and effects; finally a situation arises which brings about the end of narrative ...Usually the agents of cause and effect are characters. (Bordwell and Thompson 1985)

What this definition allows is the beginning of an examination of narrative. My examination of narrative will concentrate firstly on the structure. This will lead to teasing out some of the implications that can be derived from the structure.

My intention is not to attempt an exhaustive overview of structuralist approaches to narrative and I am conscious that I am omitting fascinating areas that include the notion of myth (in both Barthes and Levi Strauss's terms) as well as psychoanalytic approaches that have informed much of the development of these debates. My objective is simply to introduce a way in to media education through narrative which it is my contention is a crucial area, one informed by theory that is pertinent to this field of study, which can itself inform the field of language teaching and one that can then be developed to a greater sophistication.

Underlying any approach to structuralism are two basic premises. Firstly, while thousands of different stories exist and these are told through diverse media, such as novels, legends, folk tales, ballads or epic poetry, comics or television, all these stories share certain common qualities. Secondly, these qualities (which might not be immediately obvious) can take the form of underlying structures, which can be identified by means of analysing different stories or groups of stories. (This aspect will be clarified as the theories are examined.)

Two structuralist theorists who have been drawn upon particularly in film studies include Todorov and the Russian Formalist Propp. These approaches have been described particularly in relation to film, but are applicable to and share the basic structure with literary texts, comics, television drama as well as commercials, news reporting, and even those media areas traditionally considered as non-fictive, like documentaries and news programmes. The intense interest that has surrounded narrative probably derives from its universality.

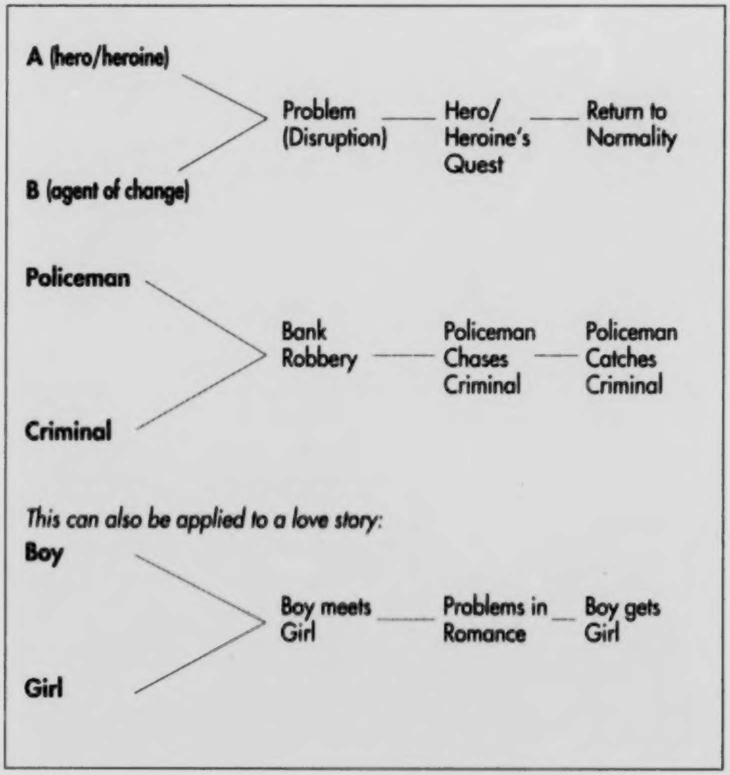
The narrative process

When one considers the overall narrative course or structure, the ideas of Todorov are useful for our purposes. He describes the narrative process as beginning at a point of equilibrium, a state of order, of happiness, fulfilment. This state is then (usually fairly early in the process) disrupted by an event, a crisis, a power, thereby creating a disequilibrium. The course of the narrative then is caught up with the attempt to put right the disequilibrium or deal with the disruption and its effects. By the conclusion of the narrative, this disequilibrium has been rectified and there is a return to a new state of equilibrium. This second state of equilibrium is never quite the same as the initial one. Rather this is an altered state, perhaps similar to the first.

This simple structural understanding is extremely useful as this trajectory from equilibrium, to disruption and back to equilibrium is easy to map and enables the learner to begin to anticipate the possible outcome of narratives with simply the opening scenes and the disruption. Wall and Kruger offered the following diagram as useful:

I would suggest that film sequels such as *Jaws 1, 2* etc make for interesting exercises just to alert us to the notions of narrative structure that we actually are continually employing without consciously articulating an awareness of the structure.

Using the example of *Jaws*, we begin with the state of plenitude. This is violently disrupted by the shark attack on the girl. The trajectory leads us through its trials and loops of suspense finally


A (hero/heroine)
B (agent of change)
Problem (Disruption)
Hero/ Heroine's Quest
Return to Normality
Policeman
Criminal
Bank Robbery
Policeman Chases Criminal
Policeman Catches Criminal
This can also be applied to a love story:
Boy
Girl
Boy meets Girl
Problems in Romance
Boy gets Girl

to the destruction of the shark. We return to a state of equilibrium, albeit a different one from the initial one. The narrative in this one reaches closure, one of its important characteristics.

Those other areas of narrative, namely the chain of events with their cause and effect relationship, and the role of characters, are focussed on when employing the insights of Vladimir Propp, the Russian formalist.

Vladimir Propp's Morpholgy of the Folktale was first published in 1928, yet was only translated into English in 1958. His initial aim was a fairly modest one. He chose to analyse the Russian folktale in an attempt to establish a reliable system for their classification. Prior to his work, many researchers had classified them according to what might have been a more obvious criterion, namely according to theme. This Propp felt was problematic in certain ways for it was possible that frequently themes would overlap, and this classification masked the similarities between those tales with dissimilar themes. Consequently, Propp ignored entirely the content of the hundred folktales he analysed and concentrated solely on the latent form. He broke down these folk tales to what he considered their essential parts, which he called *functions*. A function consisted of a single action, which was not related to a literal event but served to describe a particular function that it performed in the overall development of the narrative. As a result of this, it is possible to find the same action having a different function. An example of this could be that of a prince entering a castle whereby he could be

a) breaking an interdict
b) solving a difficult task
c) preparing for a wedding.

Conversely two different acts could actually serve the identical function. With reference to those tales that Propp examined, both giving an eagle to a hero or giving Ivan a ring could serve as a magical agent.

While it becomes obvious that Propp placed more emphasis on action than on character, he does also categorize characters in terms of their sphere of function within the narrative. Disregarding their personal qualities, the hero becomes identifiable, not by his stunning good looks or white hat, for example, but by the sphere of action he inhabits, namely he goes on a quest. Propp established seven character functions in all:

1. villain
2. donor or provider (who gives the magical agent or helper)
3. helper (to the hero)
4. princess and father (who is sought for, assigns tasks, etc)
5. dispatcher (who sends the hero on the task)
6. hero or victim
7. false hero (who potentially claims the hero's sphere of action)

It is interesting to compare this with Bordwell and Thompson's understanding of character which reiterates this aspect of characterization (that has implications in terms of realism as there is the inherent tendency towards stereotypes.)

> Characters in narratives are not real people...they are constructed in narrative; they are collections of character traits...In general, a character will have the number and kind of traits needed to function adequately in narrative... (Bordwell and Thompson 1985)

Propp arrived at four conclusions which are quoted below.

PROPP'S THIRTY ONE NARRATIVE FUNCTIONS

PREPARATION

1. A member of the family leaves home.
2. A prohibition or rule is imposed on the hero.
3. This prohibition is broken.
4. The villain makes an attempt at reconnaisance.
5. The villain learns something about his victim.
6. The villain tries to deceive the victim to get possession of him or his belongings.
7. The victim unknowingly helps the villain by being deceived or influenced by the villain.

COMPLICATION

8. The villain harms a member of the family.

8a. A member of the family lacks or desires something.

9. This lack or misfortune is made known; the hero is given a request or command and he goes or is sent on a mission/quest.
10. The seeker (or the hero) plans action against the villain.

TRANSFERENCE

11. The hero leaves home.
12. The hero is tested, attacked, interrogated, and as a result receives either a magical helper or agent.
13. The hero reacts to the actions of the future donor.
14. The hero uses a magical agent.
15. The hero is transferred to the general location of the object of his mission/quest.

STRUGGLE

16. The hero and villain join in direct combat.
17. The hero is branded.
18. The villain is defeated.
19. The initial lack is set right.

RETURN

20. The hero returns.
21. The hero is pursued.
22. The hero is rescued from pursuit.
23. The hero arrives home or elsewhere and is not recognized.
24. A false hero makes false claims.
25. A difficult task is set for the hero.
26. The task is accomplished.

RECOGNITION

27. The hero is recognized.
28. The false hero/villain is exposed.
29. The false hero is transformed.
30. The villain is punished.
31. The hero is married and crowned.

1. *'Functions of characters serve as stable, constant elements in a tale, independent of how and by whom they are told.'*
2. Propp found that he was able to reduce these narrative events to 31, hence the following conclusion: *'the number of functions known to the fairy tale is limited.'*
3. Propp noted that that certain kinds of functions always occurred at the same stage of the story, for example the interdiction always was near the beginning (compare Todorov's disruption), whereas the villain would only be punished towards the conclusion, and certain functions always occurred in twos and threes. Thus he concluded that, while allowing for interlinking incidents, some omission of functions, and repetitions of functions, that *'the sequence of events is always identical'*.
4. Finally, he concluded that despite their multiformity, 'all fairy tales are of one type in regard to structure'.

This information could simply appear esoteric unless we can establish the relevance of these conclusions some obscure Russian drew early in the twentieth century. After all, Propp took care to confine his judgements to the Russian folk tale while suggesting that it was possible that these narrative forms, ostensibly stylized and primitive, might have the same armature as the modern realist texts. Modern Anglo/American film theorists took up his ideas. While Propp worked from the folk-tale material and proceeded to the conclusions, these theorists worked from the hypothesis that this armature or structure suggested by Propp for the fairy tale is also present in the fiction film, much as a hypothesis. They tested the hypothesis and claimed an easy fit. Examples of this include Wollen's close reading of *North by North-West*. Of course, this then begins to beg certain questions, which will partly be answered in the remaining explications: Was this fit to the Proppian model due to selective choice or was the narrative distorted to fit the mould? And does it only work on certain texts, say the classic Hollywood texts?

Teaching about narrative

Using Propp in teaching

The preceding synopsis of some of the ideas of these two theorists leads to my proposal that their insights are extremely useful in teaching the concepts of narrative and issues relating to realism. The structural outlines remain useful in assisting students in working and understanding narrative. It must be stressed however that this is just the initial work, and simply is a way into dealing with narrative in a structural way that is removed from purely subjective responses. It has been my experience that students enjoy the discovery of the narrative structure, the hypothesis testing, the identification of the functions. It is also such an accessible area to work with even at a fairly basic level. My proposal would be that the structural underpinning of a media text can be identified and referred to in terms of then examining the *discourses* that they are underpinning which will be dealt with after looking at ways of using Propp's model. The use of narrative is so pervasive in our culture that it is an extremely accessible arena of work. (Pre-school teachers are working with narrative when they get children to sequence pictures in order to construct stories.) Where there is access to a VCR, advertisements from broadcast television are extremely useful for analysis with some judicious

Visual	Audio	Function
From the left, a blond woman moves through a door being opened by a young man (only his back is visible. The woman is young, blond, dressed in sophisticated black, with earrings, bracelets. She moves in while the man backs towards the camera/viewer.	Music slow, low. Woman: *I've just moved in next door. Could I borrow a Diet Pepsi?*	8a
Reverse shot: Michael J. Fox, surprised, gasps, backing towards the kitchen.	Fox: *Whew, sure!*	9
Fox rushes down the passage, leaps into the air and gives a victory gesture.	Upbeat music	11
Fox at the fridge looks into empty Diet Pepsi bottles.	Fox calling: *Be right with you.*	
Cut to woman examining pictures on his wall.		
Fox shinning down fire escape in rain.		12
Sash window drops. Fox jumps off ladder that ends high above ground level. He lands.	Voice-over: *When you go all out for taste, go for the taste of Pepsi Diet Cola*	15
Stands up, looking around. Shot of Pepsi vending machine across the road. Fox climbs over cars. Rests head on vending machine		19
Cut to woman in flat beginning to walk towards kitchen. Fox at window (which closed.)	Music: *Down the streets*	
Cut back to waiting woman	Sound of smashing glass Woman: *You OK in there?*	
Fox appears at the doorway.		20
Close up shot of Fox.	*Hope it wasn't too mcuch trouble.*	
Shot of both Fox and woman.		
Close up of Fox, wet hair and smiling. Logo for diet Pepsi with caption 'Taste the difference with Diet Pepsi'	Fox: *No trouble at all.* (Sound of falling glass from window.) Voice-over: *Taste the difference with Diet Pepsi.*	

choosing.

I am going to make reference to a particular advertisement which is for Diet Pepsi, screened on British television. The Diet Pepsi advertisement has a duration of 30 seconds. There are 20 edits and when analysed according to the Proppian functions, this narrative complies with the order that he has proposed. The structure is that of a task, a quest to be accomplished. Indeed, our hero (after all it is Michael J Fox) achieves it in spite of the obstructions presented him. The proceeding analysis indicates this structure and the functions that I have identified with students. Only eight functions are identified, but then Propp allowed for omissions; it follows the prescribed sequence and the two characters can be identified as the hero and the princess, although I would consider her as filling a dual role of dispatcher/princess.

It is astounding how many advertisements employ a narrative format, from insurance and banking, to car adverts, to chocolate and cigarettes. What makes this structure very appropriate is perhaps the magical agent (see Propp's functions 12 and 14). If one considers that the magical agent that is given to the hero in order for him to complete his quest or perform his task, can in fact be a credit card, a slab of chocolate or cigarettes, condoms, a gun or a magic ring, the options for its application multiply. These commercials frequently centre around a woman (victim/princess) experiencing a lack (blocked drain, no ideas for dinner, cockroaches, no dates for Saturday night) which are resolved by her confronting a donor who suggests the magical agent (a particular brand of drain cleaner, insect-repellant (ozone -friendly?), pimple cream or deodorant) and in this way the original lack or misfortune is liquidated. Furthermore, within commercial type narratives, the characters fit very neatly into the Proppian character types. (Once students of media have comprehended the Proppian notions, they can put this into practice by taking any commercial product and with the stipulation that it must function as the magical agent, create a commercial according to the functions above. They will immediately become marketers!) Commercial products can also function in other ways in advertising: they can be the object of the quest, or they can be part of the reward that goes with the successful completion of a task/quest. Consider those 'after action' type scenarios where particular brands of beer and cigarettes mark such celebration or revelry.

One thing that must be mentioned although it is not possible to deal with it sufficiently, is this question of if we know so much and the stories are all the same, why bother? This approach does not take into account the important issue of endless possibilities, of suspense, of our suspension of our disbelief, of our subjectivity in process, our identificatory roles and psychic involvement in scenario of our culture.

A realization of the narrative structure marks the first part of the enterprise. I suggested that the acknowledgement of the structure opens the gates (should we suggest flood gates) to media awareness in many ways. Moving to the implications of the structure is the next very necessary stage of the enterprise.

Tale telling: Some implications

> Narrative is always a process of transformation of the balance of *elements that constitute its pretext:* the interruption of an initial equilibrium and the tracing of the dispersal and refiguration of its compo-

> nents. (Author's emphasis) (Neale 1987)

We need at this stage to take cognizance of the nature of the elements that Neale mentions; these elements are the encoding of the different discourses that underlie any narrative. It is to the discourses then that the study of narrative must lead us, the strands of which are drawn through.

One of the characteristics of the narratives that we confront in various media forms is the implicit notion that what the audience is presented with are things as they are, not as a representation. This is an aspect of their realist nature. However, a narrative can only exist once it is told. While events might occur on a a particular day, these only exist as such until certain details are selected by a narrator and told to an audience. Crucial to our understanding of media then is this need for us to acknowledge that the narrator, even if s/he is elusive or invisible, even if it appears to be the neutral and factual account of an event, some human agency prepared this narrative for a listener/reader/viewer. In this way any media product or text is 'spoken' by someone or some people. As such it is often described as a discourse, more specifically as the discourse of those producing the narrative. As such, media students begin to acknowledge that within this relating of a sequence of events, there is the implicit assumption that this narrative is exactly that: a discourse from a particular view. After all the closure which marks the end of the narratives imply a lack of contradiction. Consequently, the structure unmasked has implications; certain narratives favour specific discourses and will favour a particular ideology. It is when the student identifies this agenda that the tale becomes telling!

Genre

Frequently, the study of genre has been undertaken - interesting because genres are manifestations of particular variations of the greater narrative structure that has already been proposed.

> The system of narration characteristic of mainstream cinema is one that orders that dispersal and refiguration in a particular way, so that dispersal, disequilibrium is both maintained and contained in figures of symmetry, of balance, its elements finally replaced in a new equilibrium whose achievement is the condition of narrative closure.....
>
> Genres are modes of this narrative system, regulated orders of its potentiality. (Neale 1987)

Perhaps what genres as 'instances of repetitions and difference' offer also is an opportunity to identify certain common discourses that are characteristic of the genre. Westerns and gangster/thriller films come to mind immediately, perhaps because they have historically received so much attention. Particular genres inscribe different discourses in certain ways. Within a gangster film for example, the discourses of heterosexual love and law are encoded in different ways: crime forms the disruption that threatens the initial situation, with the issue of heterosexual love as a bit on the side, whereas in a musical, the disruption will relate more frequently to a romantic lack. Certain viewers choose certain genres for the satisfaction they are offered by engaging in those predictable scenarios. It has been suggested that genre assures a comprehension and interpretability of these texts.

> The audience - without conscious awareness - thus continually rehearses basic social contradictions that cannot be resolved within the existing socioeconomic system outside of the text: law and order

> versus the idea of individual success (the gangster genre); nature versus culture (the Western); the work ethic versus the pleasure principle (the musical). (Feuer 1987)

To understand examples of a genre simply as formulaic responses to a convention would be to ignore that aspect of genre that Neale describes: the difference part of the 'similarities and differences'. (Within this volume, Lesley Marx (1991) engages in an analysis that incorporates this emphasis on difference and the potential for genres to respond to social shifts.)

The discourse surrounding masculinity and its complexities are worked through in various ways in those media texts that deal with the active male confronting the wilderness (westerns), law (thriller/gangsters), war and society. The different male figures as in the A-team for example enable the different scenarios of male bonding, achievement and heroism to be activated, all this within the dominant *patriarchal* framework of the culture. The spate of Vietnam war films have been understood as coping with the US male psyche. Heath discusses Jaws as a Watergate film:

> Mayor Larry Vaughan of amity, Long Island, serves his electors by hushing up a shark attack; the white male middle class — not a single woman in the film — in the person of police chief Martin Brody will recognize the duplicity and pull the town through with an ordinary-guy brand of heroism born of fear-and-decency. (Bennett et al (eds.) 1981)

The discourse of the family within television programmes, series and serials certainly does not reflect the average listener's situation. If it is calculated that in England two thirds of television viewers do not live in a nuclear family set-up , it is not probable to be a significantly different proportion in this country. However the dominant discourse normalizes the nuclear family situation as natural and preferable.

Questions must arise in terms of the discourse. Let us look at the Proppian armature alone. Clearly in these terms we have a hero. Should we examine the heroes of both the Russian folk tales, our own, our prevalent popular media as well, certain clear conclusions suggest themselves in terms of the discourses. Within those popular forms of culture we encounter as mass media, the heroes are white and male, and in certain media and genres they are middle to upper middle class. The position of the victim/princess structured passively as part of the reward system is frequently the only positive feminine role allowed. Again this discourse might suggest a particular age, race and class for the particular character, depending on the genre. One step further, the active roles traditionally go to the hero or the villain. Action pivots on these central figures and it is these figures that are generally considered worth developing in significant psychological depth. Women can indeed be active especially when they put on the hat of villainess (our stereotype of the harlot or seductress). If we take US TV soap operas (so well-loved by SABC and M-net programmers), in this area the role of the powerful women usually suggests manipulation of men in terms of using their formidable sexuality. The examples abound. I believe it must be said that there are dominant discourses, those that function through the frequent use of stereotypes, that serve the functions of the particular social order. The point is that these customary formats, predictable outcomes and familiar characters leave little room for speculation. They become naturalized by their constant repetition, and these representations become normalized as the status quo: the acceptable way of life both in the media and outside of it. Neale's description of narrative in film applies to media generally:

> Narrative is not essential to cinema, but historically the latter has been developed and exploited as a narrative form: *against* dispersion, *for* representation, where representation is less immediately a matter of 'what is represented' than of positioning; narrative in cinema is first and foremost the organization of a point of view through the image flow, the laying out of an intelligibility, the conversion of seen into scene as the direction of the viewing subject. (Neale 1987)

Clearly there are important conclusions that relate to the structure of narrative in different categories of media (for example TV serials in contrast to TV series, news stories, feature films, game shows). For our immediate purposes it must suffice to suggest that the Proppian model provides a generous gateway into approaching narrative that allows pupil discovery, as well as practically ensures success at a task in an area which could well be new. What also will become obvious, will be those narratives that do not fit the model. These will suggest variations of the discourses that reflect the contradictions within society. (The ever popular Cagney and Lacey series suggests an alternative to the hero format: the pair of women cops replacing the frequently lone man.)

As educationists we are positioned within a society that inscribes its discourses with (among others) race, sex, class and age overtones. An analysis of narrative in any aspect of media can assist in acquiring an understanding how these discourses are inscribed both in the media and nurtured in the society at large, how these representations organize the 'real' world for us and how we acquire our knowledge. By teaching how we come by our knowledge we begin to develop students who are not only critically aware, but more importantly who are critically autonomous long after they have left the portals of the academy. ■

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The Horror Genre & its Possibilities in the Classroom

Mandy Jordan

At a recent English conference, Alexander Johnston said words to this effect: When we sit down in a cinema and the film comes on, we subconsciously ask what the film is about; it is from this critical point then, that we judge. To elaborate, I think that we, as amateur film critics, must be able to explain the principles on which the film can be meaningfully associated with other of its kind. We need to know that genre functions according to sets of rules and conventions about which we have certain pre-conceived expectations of character, theme and even visual imagery. It would, therefore, seem fitting that we encourage our pupils, in an experiential way, to examine what comprises the typical formulae which have entrenched cinematic archetypal icons and have dominated our way of perceiving.

Genre study is psychologically satisfying in that there is a sense of reliability when patterns are recognised, repeated and reinforced. Ironically the cinema, I believe, also gives new forms of expression and transmission in this way ensuring continuity and therefore survival of these self-same conventions. Genre study then gives us the opportunity to examine our present film experience in the light of the film traditions of the past. According to optimistic critics, Phillip Drummond says, this would have 'therapeutic value' for the viewer. The pessimistic critics might condemn the rituals of genre for 'mystifying the realities of social experience through displacement and repetition'. Nevertheless, by examining these contradictory critical perspectives, we as teachers, might pose the following question to a bright class for examination : Do genres work through present social concerns, producing new experience and knowledge or do they simply repeat the existing formulae and thereby reduce themselves to limitingly narrow and rigid stereotypes?

On a more simple level, perhaps as an introduction to film study, we might ask what fictional worlds are represented to us through the major genres? What actually happens in such basic genres as the western, the thriller or the horror film. This is where I begin to link the theory to my own pedagogic experience. I elected to study the horror genre with my classes to introduce them to the 'cinema paradiso'.

Why this particular genre, you might ask? As a teacher, I have the responsibility, I believe, to work within the parameters of my pupils' world experience and many adolescents have a predeliction for horror. After a quick reconnaissance of my own local video shops, I found that adolescent girls particularly watch this genre especially after their exams. Why is there this compulsion for horror among adolescents, as most people ordinarily shun what disgusts them?

Noel Carrol (1990) offers some profound and philosophical possibilities about the paradox of the horror genre. Very simplified they suggest, firstly, that horror evokes 'cosmic fear'. Humans, he says are born with a kind of fear which borders on awe. Thus, he asserts, the attraction of supernatural horror is that it provokes this sense of awe which confirms a deep-seated human conviction about the world and those fixed laws of nature which are our only safeguard against 'the assaults of chaos and the demons of unplumbed space'. Secondly, he asserts that the narrative structure of the horror genre revolves around 'proving, disclosing, discovering and confirming the existence of something impossible'. In watching a horror film then, we are transported temporarily into Dante's Inferno. Thirdly, he offers a psychological account which I think Stephen King (1982) makes more accessible in *Danse Macabre* - his hand book on horror. He says that much of the horror story's attraction for us is that it allows us vicariously to exercise those anti-social emotions and feelings which society demands we keep sublimated. He believes that sex (albeit sometimes presented in disguised Freudian terms) is a strong driving force in the horror genre and I think that this perhaps is one of the attractions of the genre for adolescents who are struggling to come to terms with their own sexuality. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* contains some very erotic writing considering that it was penned at the turn of the century.

Stephen King identifies three literary works on which he believes most of the archetypal characters and situations are founded. The 19-year old Mary Shelley's gothic novel, *Frankenstein* introduces the archetype of the 'The Thing without a Name'; Bram Stoker's, *Dracula* and R.L. Stevenson's compact novel *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* written in three days, give us the werewolf myth and we only have to think of Norman Bates in Hitchcock's *Psycho* to see how this works. (The ghost spreads out over an area too broad to be limited, he says by a single work of fiction.)

Nevertheless even the non-readers of classic horror and those who don't go to the movies have some knowledge of the creatures who have contributed to Harlem's myth pool. It was on this assumption that I experimented with a group of my students to see how much of the self-same myth pool they understood and whether the codes and conventions of the genre had already been internalised by them at the ages of fourteen and fifteen.

I split them into groups and set a task which was, I think, rather complex. They had to draw the first five frames presenting the visual narrative of the opening scenes of a horror film of their own creation. In each frame they had to consider the type of shot they as 'directors' might use to establish the scene. They had to think about how the angle of the camera might affect the audience's reactions, the type of music that might be selected - once again to control audience response, any special effects, and finally how the juxtaposing of certain scenes might enhance the impact on the viewer.

We did have a preliminary discussion on some of the elements that might contribute to the mood but by and large, the storyboards which emerged were products of the boys' own work. The point of the exercise was, as I saw it, to pool their own ideas and expand their experiences of our initial discussion into concrete and active work with a media text using a range of skills which were easily transferable to other genres.

The exercise was extremely rewarding in that the work which was eventually produced was highly creative and innovative. The boys seemed to have a natural camera eye, and their narratives were all spine-chilling and original (drawn, however, from their own past experiences with the horror genre). Many of the groups made their own audio tapes to accompany their story boards and one group had the creaking sound of an empty swing blurring into the sound for the next frame of the windscreen wipers smearing the film titles written in blood across the windscreen of the school bus.

One group were so excited by the project that they decided to video their work, casting themselves as the characters. Here is the report they gave me about their efforts.

REPORT ON FILMING OF MOVIE

> Our group really came away with a greater knowledge of what movie-makers go through to come out with the finished product. To plan the whole occasion took approximately five hours, the time to actually film was an hour. In the end we had a film four minutes long. We therefore worked out that : for every one minute of the finished product, it took fifteen minutes of filming, and seventy-two minutes of preparation. Due to lack of time, we decided to film the movie as a 'one off' thing with no editing or re-takes. We formulated a plot and then a script and made arrangements for the actual filming. The day arrived, and after teaching the camera operator, who had never filmed before, how to work the camera, we got down to business.
>
> After three practices we filmed the first scene, and all went well. The other scenes went off well, only that the poor actor (OR SHOULD IT BE ACTRESS?) playing Candi, had to lie on a freezing cold stream while the rest of the cast practised the scene three times, it was mid-winter! We never checked that anything had come out right as we went along, we just hoped for the best. We finished filming after an hour and sat down to view our artistry. We were surprised to see that, due to bad light, the video had turned out blue! But the movie was supposed to be a horror, so it added to the atmosphere, no sweat. Our camera operator did extremely well, making only one mistake in cutting a line off too soon. Luckily the costumes and props were readily available and simple. We thought we did pretty well for our first attempt and all agreed that it was a gruelling task, but we all enjoyed it and decided that it has been a worthwhile experience.
>
> OSCARS ALL ROUND DON'T YOU THINK??

In conclusion then, because cinematic genres become systems of understanding and appeal, they provide blueprints for producers who continue to feed the movie audiences' desire for established patterns. I believe that some definition of the various ingredients of genre will therefore be an important springboard from which to launch our pupils into film study. Using experiential techniques of self-discovery, they can build up reference catalogues of terminology, conventions of the particular genre under consideration, and be in a confident position from which to identify and then analyse the components of the various cinematic texts they encounter. ■

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TRAILING CLOUDS OF GLORY
The Kiddie in Local Advertising

Guy Willoughby

In this paper, I examine a local application of a favourite myth in Western culture, that of childhood's special knowledge, by the South African advertising industry. I hope thereby to demonstrate a polymorphous model of media study, in which the strategies of social science combine with those of literary research. My enquiry depends on the simultaneous application of several knowledges: that of the local political economy, and the complex ideological formations that it begets; further, the mythic structures, motifs and images which recur in our cultural practices and habits; then, the particular role of the advertising industry in this nexus of ideological and mythic activity. Lastly, I trace the synchronic operation of all these significances in particular texts themselves, the rhetoric and grammar of actual artefacts — in this case, actual advertisements. Here we have the category of aesthetics, the codes of pleasure active in a society, which determine the extent of a text's success — whether, in short, it finds an audience. That success depends on both the *recognizability* and the *difference* with which these codes are deployed; if I speak here the language of structuralism, I must add the rider that, today, this is merged with aesthetics, the province of specific pleasures for the reader.

Otium & the Myth of Childhood

I begin with Wordsworth's splendid recreation of my theme:

> Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
> The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar:
> Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing cloud of glory do we come
> From God, who is our home:
> Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
> Shades of the prison-house begin to close
> Upon the growing Boy
> But he
> Beholds the light, and whence it flows,
> He sees it in his joy;
> ...
> At length the Man perceives it die away,
> And fade into the light of common day. (st.5)

Wordsworth's famous *Ode: Intimation of Immortality, from Recollections of Early Childhood* (1807) both captures and restates a durable myth of Western culture: that of the special, privileged, charmed knowledge of childhood. (By 'myth', I intend both the Barthesian sense of a belief or practice, purveyed by the dominant class in a society at a given time [Barthes 1972], and Northrop Frye's view of a belief, concretized in a set of images that recurs across generations of literary texts, often submerged or greatly modified [Frye 1973].) It is worth noting that this myth has a genealogy, if not a history; it coalesces in the Romantic period around a reaction to the ordered, symmetrical and premeditated, held responsible by Wordsworth's generation for the ugly impact of mass-industrialization. As the *Ode* indicates, childhood becomes the last refuge of that 'backward glance', as Peter Marinelli puts it (1971, pp. 8) — the urge to return to *Otium*, the Golden Age of innocence, freedom, spontaneity, which is celebrated in Pastoral poetry. If the modern industrial world is increasingly 'a prison-house', in Wordsworth's graphic phase, the special virtues of childhood becomes its vivid memory of the blissful origins of humanity: the child 'beholds the light, and whence it flows,/He sees it in his joy.'

The new focus on infancy, as the 'civilized' individual's equivalent experience of the savage's state of nature', is traceable to Jean-Jacques Rouseau's *Emile* (1762), and is developed in England by Blake and Wordsworth in particular. The older view of children as small-scale adults (as represented for us, for instance, in the art of the Renaissance) gradually gives way to the belief in childhood as a site of privileged experiences: as the madman is institutionalized, so the child comes to the fore as the silent visionary or seer. (See Foucault 1971). The idea is energetically advanced in the nineteenth century: Dickens single-handedly does a great deal for the myth in England. There are complex ideological reasons for this, but undoubtedly an underlying motive was the embourgeoisement of European society, the focus on the nuclear as opposed to the extended family, with its consequent attention to the child as the locus of prospective proprietorial feelings: if private property becomes the norm, the sign of value, the child in the home becomes the unit of that value. (Of course, the Angel of the Home, Mother, is its tutelary spirit: see Houghton 1957).

This novel attention to children is fostered in the twentieth century, by the increasing specialization and diversification of the West's economy. Increased spending-power allowed the development of children's products, (toys, food, games et al,) which created a whole new area of consumption, that caters to the charmed space of childhood. This diversification fosters also the separation of 'work' from 'leisure' for many adults in our society: consequently the urge to live vicariously through one's offspring, to enjoy through them the play that is so circumscribed in the actual world, is greatly heightened. (The interest of mothers and fathers in the toys they buy for their offspring is a subject ripe for psychological study).

As Packard points out, a deep-seated (Protestant) guilt is actively aroused, and satisfied, by the advertisers: guilt at working longer hours — or, in the case of women, of working at all — translates into awesome buying power. *Do not deny the child* is the unstated ethic here (denial, of course, is never a virtue in consumer society). The current drive of advertisers to win Black South Africans for consumerism, which I discuss presently, includes this view: *do not deny future generations what you have lacked*: this is the mythic signified of 'multi-racial' advertising in South Africa today.

Throughout the West, the drive to market childrens' products turns on a teasing irony, or contradiction: the impulse to protect the sanctity of childhood, which draws anxious parents into the shops, also prompts a great effort to milk it. (In our society, examples of this piquant condition abound: I read Barry Ronge's principled condemnation of the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* film — 'the worst immorality of the film (is the) shameless recycling of proven commercial images, spun together with more exciting violence to promote the sale of plastic toys' — which is juxtaposed on the same page of the *Sunday Times* with 'the Great Sunday Times Giveaway competition' for Ninja clothes, toys and movie tickets (1 July 1990); elsewhere in the same paper, I read a hand-wringing article headlined 'Shame of gymslip "sex for sale' clubs," about teenage prostitution in Johannesburg, which is enticingly close to a colour photograph of two lissome, barely pubescent entrants for the 'Miss Eastgate' title: and so on.)

By the beginning of the post-war period in America, and shortly thereafter elsewhere, 'teenager' as a separate (market) category has been fixed, with its own buying and spending power, and a 'youth culture' comes into being to cater for it (and thus Rock 'n Roll, youth fashions, the Swinging Sixties, et al: a complex, shifting process of ideological formation: see Harker 1980). During the same period, children themselves increasingly have buying power too: the *Ninja Turtle* craze may stand as a figure for the enormous income that may accrue from kiddies' films, fads, fashions, toys, et cetera. (I use the term 'kiddies', henceforward, only partly as an irony: it represents the banal, transatlantic version of Wordsworth's myth, and plays up, I hope, the reduction of children to the status of fluffy-mopped animals. It is also the jargon of the ad industry.)

Yet the resilient, durable myth of childhood's specialness, its 'glory' and its 'joy', persists: although they now look increasingly like the little adults of the pre-Romantic era, they are adults with this difference: they are defined by a separate culture, with separate values, apparently fostered and protected by the unique grace of youth. In reality, that culture is fostered and protected by the system of corporate capitalism, even in search of markets, and its powerful handmaiden, the advertising industry — that remarkable force in western society which, in Kenneth Galbraith's words, 'by making goods important makes the industrial system important' (1972, pp.215). It is the extent of that industry's involvement in the childhood myth, and market, that I will now trace.

Advertising & its Ideological Function

Late twentieth-century living, in the so-called First World, enshrines a paradox: while I am more and more divorced by circumstances and custom from my neighbour, I am more and more connected to the business of the planet (and beyond) by electronics. In this 'global village' — McLuhan was right in this instance — the mass-media are a vital source of communality, and the advertising industry (which appears, historically, at the same time as these 'mass' media: Williams 1972) has for long utilized this emotional as well as technical resource. Indeed, the history of advertising in its modern, organized form represents a series of victorious encounters, in a sedulous colonizing of the Western mind; by the end of the First World War, advertisers had already discovered that emotions were easier to sell than products (see F.R. Leavis's *Culture and Environment* written in 1933, which contains the first coherent educational riposte in England to the process). By the 1950s the conscious investigation and manipulation of depth-psychology techniques had become widespread: Vance Packard's classic study *The Hidden Persuaders: An*

Introduction to The Techniques of Mass-Persuasion (1957) remains both a racy exposé of these practices in the industry, and an unconscious tribute to their effectiveness.

A study of this history reveals the adman's recurrent problem, which is precisely the problem of all more covert purveyors of dominant ideology: the advertiser must not overstep the prevailing bounds of taste, propriety (consider the recent withdrawal of one in a highly successful series of ads, on a 'squirrel' theme by the Trust Bank in South Africa: the offending copy urged readers to 'protect your nuts'). Yet today the ubiquitous presence of advertising, especially on radio and television, proves that the industry has successfully ingratiated itself with the (First-World) public; Americans apparently receive about 1500 commercial messages a day (*Saturday Star*, 21 July 1990), which indicates just how low their tolerance level has become. The reason, ultimately, for this success is mythological, in precisely the sense of both Barthes and Frye: advertisements enshrine for us our myths, conventions, practices, dreams and aspirations; their culling — I do not think that too harsh a word — of the wealth of the West's image-repertoire is widespread, wholesale and irresistible. Consider this fond estimate, recently, in *Tribute*, a polished local magazine dedicated to the selling of First-World ideals to Black South Africans: 'We have all become advertising sophisticates. We know we are being sold to and, on the whole — providing it's done with style and occasionally even some wit — we do not mind ... These ads touch a chord and become favourite telly companions' (Rothnie 1990). Those 'chords', or codes, are clearly very real indeed.

Advertising & Ideological Crisis in South Africa

Now, the general scenario I have sketched here for the West — perhaps the 'First World', by which I mean the global capitalist economy, would be a better appellation — has a particular, an urgent application in South Africa. For corporate capital, and its guiding ethic of endless consumerism, is under seige, and is engaged in a mighty labour of persuasion — directed at a disenfranchised and largely proletarian majority — to sustain itself. A plethora of company reports, financial surveys, feature articles, business seminars and media interviews announce, since the unbanning of mass political organisations on 2 February 1990, the great ideological battle against collectivist economics: 'What business needs to do', says John Kane-Berman of the SA Institute of Race Relations, 'is make out a convincing case that under a capitalist system growth will be higher than under some other system. It needs to show that a capitalist system can distribute fairly and equitably, and to convince black people that they will share in the benefits of rapid economic growth' (*The Sunday Times*, 24 June 1990).

While business and its organs have energetically responded to this clarion call (the editorials of the *Financial Mail*, February - June, are representative), a subtler form of irregular warfare is being waged by the advertising industry for consumerism. The magazine, *Tribute*, for instance, recently considered the implications of the increasing multi-racial content of TV commercials: ads, we are told, convey 'images not just of good cooking, but also of the good life, or what admen call 'aspirational' images. And because so many people's aspirations have to do with South

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Africa's political future, advertising often takes on a greater significance than just selling products and services' (Delia Rothne, April 1990). Multi-racial advertising, then, serves the goal of a 'non-racial society'; it also serves a still more profound function, namely the winning of (black) converts to a certain vision of 'the good life', the eager, receptive consumerism 'necessary', in Galbraith's words, 'for the performance and prestige of the industrial system' (1972, pp. 215).

There has recently been much anxious debate about the future of the advertising industry in South Africa (see, for instance, the 'Media and Marketing' pages of the *Saturday Star*: Moerdyk 1990 b-d), and an underlying panacea has been offered: it is that of 'customer care'. Given the volatile political climate, and the continuing ideological battle, the panacea is understandable, for it reminds advertisers of the mythic superstructure on which their operations finally depend: and in this climate, the still-potent myth of childhood and its special knowledge gains a new currency. For children are the ultimate index of 'care' in our society, and — consciously or unconsciously — South Africa's advertisers have appropriated that index into their protean operations: a company that portrays kiddies in its media imagery gains, I will show, a two-fold advantage. It is 'caring', firstly, and gains the attention thus of mothers, fathers, family members; and — more cunning still — it acquires the numinosity of childhood's grace and insight, for the myth of that special knowledge is given, a benison, to the product.

Before I turn directly to the conventions of kiddie-advertising, it is worth observing the contest of competing forces, or interests, in our society for the sanctifying badge of childhood. In actual, political terms, children in South Africa have become the locus, even the vanguard, of a punishing struggle for a future dispensation; since the Soweto uprising of 1976, the youth in Black Communities have generated political disaffection, revolt, mass action — and have promoted, in return, a brutal and concerted repression in the part of the state and its law-enforcement agencies in the 1980s. Ideologically, a schizophrenia in the national consciousness of children has developed (as with so many things): while white children remained emblems of innocent good to be protected, black children were beaten, chased, brutalized. The local outcry against child-abuse at the end of the Eighties, I suggest, reveals a curious ideological fissure: while township youth were being harassed, detained, even tortured, and savaged by the system and the endemic power-struggles it threw up, the special sanctity of white children and the 'heaven of their infancy' was the subject of a vast, well-publicized *agon*. In so doing, the ideological apparatus of the state, with its hegemony contested, was able to demonstrate its moral concern, to reiterate to all contestants in an increasingly ugly political battle that virtue lies at the heart of the polity; detentions, torture, violence and censorship of every kind might be temporally necessary, but the state and its agencies remained deeply aware of its ethical, Judeo-Christian responsibilities.

You will have noticed that, in 1990, the outpouring of moral indignation has worn off; in this year of the 'new' South Africa, the hegemonic need for this virtuous excision from the body politic of its offending members has receded; society is more moral, open, wholesome, again; we no longer lock up children, certainly not in the number that existed earlier. So child-abuse is last year's problem, last year's issue, those unfortunates still being arrested relegated to the media death of the inner pages of our papers, and the structural determinants of child abuse in a society of repressed desire, obsessive personal secrecy and nuclear exclusiveness, is deflected — again. Meantime, the durable myth of childhood's sanctity — which, indeed, is part of the problem — survives, more or less intact.

Into this nexus of competing interests, the advertisers shrewdly move, revitalizing and recasting the imagery of childhood: a complicated interplay of profiteering and pious sentiment, of exploitation and protection, confirms the central irony — that infant state of bliss must be both nurtured and mined — to which I have already referred. A closer scrutiny of the forms and images of the genre (for it is that) will demonstrate my claims.

The Child in Local Advertising

I am going to focus in this discussion on TV commercials, today clearly the most crucial site of mythic intervention for advertisers: as Galbraith argues, 'The industrial system is profoundly dependent on commercial television and could not exist in its present form without it' (pp. 213). As the media journals and marketing pages of our newspapers indicate, this American truth is now ours as well.

An analysis of children's presence in TV commercials, over the course of some six months (January-June), indicates two market categories, and three kinds of appeal: first, there are those directed at children themselves; then, those that appeal via children to adults, but concern products in which children are interested; thirdly — and most intriguingly — ads which feature kiddies, but which have nothing to do with the 'youth' market at all.

Ads for Kiddies

Recent research in South African has proved what advertisers in the United States have known for years (Packard pp. 159): children are more sedulous devotees of TV than their parents (Moerdyk 1990 a) and therefore the precise targeting of ads is vital. 'It's well known that marketers realize the value of the youth market - grab then young and develop brand loyalty which continues into adulthood' (Schreiber and Borthwick 1989). Now, during the children's slot on TV 1,2 and 3, that is 3-5 o'clock in the afternoon, we find a revealing set of ads that work *via* the moppets, on the purseholders, their parents: beside the obvious kiddies' market — sweets, toys — there are other foodstuffs featured which tap the youthful viewers' sensibilities. (Vance Packard described this process admirably thirty years ago: 'the merchandizers sought to groom children not only as future consumers but as shills who would lead or 'club' their parents into the salesroom' [pp. 161-2].) Here, a curious inversion takes place; whereas when kiddies are used in ads for grown-ups, the myth of childhood bliss, *otium*, is activated, in those directed at children themselves the child's assumption of the adult world, her potential to infiltrate it, is deployed.

Thus, in the *Oatso-Easy* ad, two little girls, bedecked in their mothers' make-up, jewellery and clothes, ape their 'mommies' manner too: they discuss the problems they have in 'getting the kids to eat properly'. Naturally, *Oatso-Easy* is offered as the panacea for this particular problem, and the *denouement* is especially cunning: the total signified is the authority conferred by the mere costume and manner of adulthood, which lend validity to the chosen panacea. (The rightness, 'naturalness', of a certain sexual conditioning, of course, is another mythic signified as well.)

Other ads affect an (apparent) subversion of the adult world, 'a sly sniping at parent symbols' (Packard, pp. 163), as a further means of enticing the tots' interests: this approach is especially useful when the product being peddled is not of immediate infant interest. So in the *Sunshine D* margarine commercial, the dullness of a school day (droning headmaster, slumbering kiddies in assembly) is juxtaposed with the glee of 'sarmies' liberally doused in gleaming yellow margarine, once school is out: again, the effect is twofold. Watching adults have their attachment to the *otium* myth confirmed — all that is needed to foster childhood bliss is *Sunshine D* — while their offspring enjoy the satire on the (boring) grown-up world.

A similar technique of imitation appears in the *Miss Cameo* pantihose ad, which is aimed at a slightly older age-group; Here the effect is more disturbingly sexist, the appeal (to the child's incipient vanity) more concerted. We view an aerobics class, complete with figure-hugging outfits, and synchronized routines; the only difference between these girls and their older counterparts are their ages: these girls are prepubescent. (Do we wonder at the flourishing phenomenon of 'child abuse'?) Yet their gyration, their pouting appeal, is pretty adult: the signified here is that, dressed in *Miss Cameo* pantihose, little girls can be as lithe, sexy, desirable as bigger ones; whether their mothers would agree is a moot point, but these little girls (nine, ten, eleven) today constitute a market in their own right, and the pressure on the maternal purse-strings is likely to be decisive. It is not for nothing that we suddenly have the 'Sunday Times/OK/K-TV Miss Ladybird' competition (see the *Sunday Times Magazine*, 19 August 1990: 'Miss Ladybird Meets Miss SA'): the 'pre-teen' market is a big one, and *Miss Cameo*, et al, hopes to make it bigger.

Kiddies for Grown-Ups

Now, let us move closer to the only real market, in material terms: the adults. I begin by locating the *topos* of the kiddies' ads intended for mature consumers; it is contained in one word; the family. The adorable, well-scrubbed, large-eyed kiddie of the adman's creation is always in a family, which has the following (nuclear) members. There is the *Loving Mother* eternally caring for her kiddies and husband, generally portrayed around a dining or kitchen table, in the garden, at the bedside (always soft-focus here), sometimes on holiday (the family, judging by these well-appointed surroundings, are pretty affluent, but no longer pretty white). The loving-mother-plus-kiddies scenario sells soups, spreads, foodstuffs of every description: *otium* needs sustenance, as these ads remind the attentive maternal viewer.

Then, there is the *Protective Father*, a sturdier figure, kind but vigilant, often against the world outside. Sometimes, the drama of the ad involves the loving-mother-and-kiddies in an intrigue to rescue him from that hostile world, as in the *Floro* commercial, in which the family rallies to keep dad's cholesterol down; or as with the tireless agent in the *Mobil* ad, whose family wait to succour him at the triumphant conclusion to his day.

In general, this (bright, cheerful, clean) nuclear family signifies the attainment of the ideal private life, in which the children are the site and source of happiness: the idyll depends on the rippling out of otium from the charmed infants to their attentive parents, and thus the perennial purveyors of this topos are food manufacturers (sugar and maize boards), supermarket chains, domestic cleaning agents, insurers (think of Southern Life, think of Metropolitan): all those producing supposed elixirs to sustain the children and — by extension — the blissful family unit those children create. In short, I offer a deeply-laid cultural explanation for the success of these ads, which so obviously play on the potential guilt of watching Moms and Dads; these lovely kiddies trail clouds of glory, and if they are happy their elders will gain grace as well.

Often, this nuclear unit features an extension: it is that of the Wise Grandparents, wrinkled and kindly, recalling in their fond saws and faraway looks a Saturnian Golden Age: here the advertisers affirm the special bond between the very old (wise through age) and the very young (wise through 'heaven-born freedom': Wordsworth's phrase [Ode, 1.124]). Typically, these ads portray the Wise Grandparents assuring the kiddie of the virtue in some less obviously staple item — Scott's Emulsion, Vick's Drops, Cadbury's chocolate — as if it were a privileged knowledge. Parents are never allowed into this warm circle: they are workaday interlopers, and must wait outside (outside the scene, outside the TV set) to receive, by eavesdropping, as it were, the esoteric truth — the truth that will set the children, and thus themselves, free.

The vast amount of frankly pleasurable foodstuffs on the market, unconvincing as family elixirs, choose a different approach to the same genre. Sweets, ice-creams and cooldrinks are made direct sources of that unfettered bonomie, joy, bliss, not to say delirium which occurs *amongst kiddies themselves*, in their own (carefree, Worthsworthian) environment: thus the ads for *Tinkies*, *Beacon*, *Smarties* — that joyous rain of multi-coloured droplets, against which kiddies cavort, is a semiotic triumph — et al, appeal both to children, and their parents: the former will pressurize the latter into purchasing the desirable goodies, while the latter can see (again, as outsiders: no adult intruders here) what those goodies do for childhood's charmed bliss. (Of course, the paradox of a bliss that is both innate and manufactured is not foregrounded: the punchy seamlessness of these brief narratives is inviolate — almost.)

Expanding the Terrain of the Kiddie

Recently, we have witnessed an interesting generic departure: the deployment of kiddies and their numinosity in advertising campaigns for products *entirely unrelated* to children's needs or experiences. Here the trailblazer has been the mighty Sanlam insurance company, with its striking depiction of the business world inhabited by babes-in-arms: in each of a series of ads, we are presented with a typical boardroom scenario — boss and secretary, company chairman and directors, a policy-holders' meeting — in which the key participants are infants in the guise of grown-ups: the illusion, a true visual conceit, is sustained through a marvellous interplay of tight editing, and a voice-over (of adults), apparently congruent with the shots.

The process of mythic construction and adaptation here is a great deal more novel and

audacious: the representation of kiddies in the garb and paraphenalia of business (suits, stilettos, office bric-a-brac) is a brilliant variation on Sergei Eisenstein's montage effect, in which the conjoining of unrelated images results in a new, second-order, signified. Eisenstein's theory, deployed in his earlier, revolutionary films (*Kerensky, Potemkin*), itself represents an adaptation of the Marxian dialectic (thesis/antithesis/synthesis) to the startling new medium of cinema (Eisenstein 1949). In the *Sanlam* ads, cunning editing and the juxtaposition of a great deal of unrelated footage with a soundtrack, prompts a second-order meaning which insists, wittily, *that we retain the impress of the first order*: this particular decoding — impossible outside of capitalist culture — depends on two (usually) unrelated codes, those of the baby and those of the boardroom, in the minds of its audience. Familiar corporate images and iconography meet the potent myth of childhood, and what at first glance looks like a teasing contrast of childish spontaneity with adult premeditation takes on a daunting, plausible new meaning; we are seeing a myth, in the Barthesian sense, taking shape; insurance, investment, the (hierarchical) relationships of these enterprises, are as easy, natural, even graceful, as child's play; and, what is more, as inviolate. It is a stunning mythological essay, a veritable compound of connotations (innocence, spontaneity, free play, joy, with order, calculation, competition, profit-seeking) together.

The *Sanlam* campaign is a much cleverer adaptation of the adult-imitation idea than, say the *Oatso-Easy* ads; but then, the insurers are after a much larger, more crucial market. It is worth noting the success of the babies-as-businessmen campaign. In spite of complaints to the Life Office Association that one of the advertisements is 'misleading' — the complaint was nothing but sour grapes', said the Sanlam MD, Pierre Steyn (*Sunday Times* Business supplement, 6 May 1990) — the company as of 22 June 1990 threatens to 'overtake Old Mutual on the net premium income comparison basis, this year' (*Top 100 Companies: Financial Mail Special Survey* 1990, pp. 250) — which in plainer English means that Sanlam is poised to become the most powerful life insurance organisation, in terms of assets and stock, in South Africa.

Recently, a second, related advertising venture has take place: *Toyota*, the car manufacturers, have launched a TV campaign which utilises the magic circle of children's play, untainted by adults, for new purposes. The first commercial features a crowd of 'kaalvoet kids' (as the *Sunday Times* so memorably calls them: 29 July 1990), on spindly wooden go-karts, in a breathless rough-and-tumble chase over ditches, koppies, bushes: the kids are obviously poor (tatty clothes, bare feet), the karts self-made, which means the signified thus resolves itself into phrases like *triumph over adversity, the spirit of enterprise*, et cetera; the screen pulsates with rapid edits, oblique angles, driving music: the tempo is frantic. Then, the (adult) voice-over proclaims the debut of a new range of cars: these signifiers, visual and aural, focus our attention adroitly on a product. The spirit of enterprise (no other possible reason for an image of poverty in advertising) is overlaid with the blissful *otium* of youth (these kids are literally trailing clouds of glory behind their makeshift *karre*), in order to lend to the distinctly grown-up product an aura of frontiership, resourcefulness, adventure; in particular, to grant it the thrill of childhood's full-throated enjoyment.

The cleverness of this ad is several-fold. It depends on the viewer's identification of kiddies' bliss with the new car, climatically offered at the end, but unseen: the scene must become an objective correlative, in fact, for the qualities of the car, the experience of driving it. Like the suave cigarette and liquor ads of the UK, which may not legally portray people actually enjoying their wares, the *Toyota* TV commercial relies on a transference of pleasurable emotions, not information, not even an image. Pre-eminently, it is the bliss, the heaven lying about these kiddies in their infancy, which viewers decode; and indeed, the ad reminds us of the real infantile pleasures supposed adults exult in behind the wheel. (That the children involved in the *Toyota* campaign are actually poor, and that many of their struggling parents in Krugersdorp West jumped at the chance to make a little money through their 'kaalvoet kids', is an aspect of the ad's political economy which is, of course, effaced: see the *Sunday Times* article, 29 July 1990, for a sentimental but revealing exposé).

To repeat, these commercials mark a new development for the local advertising industry; the immense, if unperceived, authority of a pervasive cultural myth is being shifted from an accepted, 'natural' area of contest (the family market-place, products for the young) to quite unrelated ones: and the endlessly protean myth-making of the industry gains (or seems likely to gain) a fresh psychic, thus financial, terrain. The imaging of children in current TV advertising, in sum, points both to the durability of a society's mythic memory-bank, and to the deflection and displacement such archetypes or *Grundgestus* — Brecht's word for a memorable compound of sound, vision and gesture — undergo, as the hidden lines of economic force ceaselessly move, a veritable stratum, beneath the floorboards of our ideological building.

I hope these analyses demonstrate quite how radical the contradictions, the fissures, in an ideological nexus can be; that they reveal how powerfully a social myth can operate, to forestall, correct, paper over the unpleasant cracks, in a hegemonic arrangement. Advertising, by energetically renewing and advancing the myth of childhood's sanctity and special knowledge, retards the stripping of false knowledges — I speak materially — in the interests of a more honest, equitable social organization. I do not mean by this that false knowledges — that 'false consciousness' of Marx — will ever be successfully eradicated; as Roland Barthes came to realise, the propensity of mythologizing is almost intrinsic to social construction, arrangements and deployments of power, the structures and utterance of language — that ultimately sly, metaphoric system — itself. (See Barthes 1979.) The critic — the reader — of popular culture must never forget the categories of pleasure her texts involve; the *numen*, the aura, of artefacts like TV ad campaigns depend at last on a recognition, a tacit willingness to be duped — or entertained — by its audience.

All kinds of pleasures can be had from these advertisements, including the critic's pleasure of analysing, deciphering, the myths, patterns, tropes of play and power; in a word, the pleasure of *divination*, which is where the critic joins the artist as the descendant of the ancient shaman, sybil, medicine man. (With this important difference: everybody attended to the medicine man then. Who listens to the critic now?) In other words, I am cautioning my readers against the heady notion that our deliberations can, or should, seek to dismantle, limit, censure the complex operations I have been describing: that would be quixotic. We can merely hope that the dissemination of techniques — an overlapping strategy of technological, ideological, mythic and rhetorical knowledge — might enable our charges to see, to read, to enjoy, while resisting, together. 'The most consistent nihilism' says Barthes, 'is perhaps *masked*: in some ways *interior* to institutions, to conformist discourse, to apparent finalities' (1975, pp. 108). It is a nihilism worth developing in relation to the media. ■

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PLAYING THE DETECTIVE
Paradic Elements in *The Big Easy* and *Chinatown*

Lesley Marx

Humphrey Bogart - 'a man men wanted to emulate and women wanted to love' (Barbour 1973, 9), a man who came to typify the hard-boiled detective, the private eye, the private dick. His privacy marked his individualist code and his marginal status, that position on the borderline of crime and the law, a position enabling him to perforate the underworld and also criticize the ineptitude of its official opponents, the police. His hard-boiledness marked his toughness, cynicism and integrity, while the slang terminology, bringing his eye and his dick into collusion, suggested both his penetrating vision and the phallic power of his presence on the screen. The two organs were equally, of course, images of his masculine appropriation of that other image central to the genre - the beautiful but treacherous woman.

John Cawelti's (1976) admirable analysis of the detective novel points to the crucial differences between the classical and the hard-boiled varieties. The classical detective works by means of ratiocination towards a 'precise definition and externalization of guilt' located in the 'least-likely person' (90). He remains clear-headed and detached, the isolated setting of the crime contributing to the comforting sense that it is outside mundane experience (96-7). Pleasure is gained from the logic of the detective's explanation, assuring us that the dark underside of being is subservient to a higher, rational order (89). The shape of the classical detective story is, finally, a comic one (108).

The hard-boiled novel offers no such consolation, and the films generated by it manifest the differences in images of great evocatory power. What appears to be a simple request from a client turns into nightmarish proportions as layer upon layer of evil and corruption reveal themselves in a 'rhythm of exposure' (147), embroiling the detective himself, his life threatened, his moral being challenged, those close to him victimized. The chiaroscuro labyrinths of the city in which he works are an image for moral ambiguity, for the collapse of boundaries between seeming and being, a landscape of lies where both people and objects deceive (McArthur 1972, 42). Furthermore, we are drawn into this world through the point of view of the detective (Cawelti 1976, 84). No longer is there a mediating Doctor Watson and a coolly controlled supersleuth to shield us. It follows from this that when the crime is solved, there is little sense of order restored to a world where the shadows are pervasive. What victory there is lies in the detective's desperate assertion of his own honour and perception of truth. Both Stefano Tani (1984, 25) and Cawelti (1976, 151) argue that the genre is centrally concerned with the hero as heir to those questors for moral centredness once typified by the knight in shining armour. Now, a bit battered in his fedora and trenchcoat, walking the gleaming rainwashed streets or riding an endless series of motor cars, cigarette smoke wreathing his head, telephone cupped to his ear, this latter-day knight tries to read the clues of a devious world in order to wrest meaning and pattern from the chaos of signifiers.

The hard-boiled detective film, like its cousin the gangster film, is deeply suspicious of what Robert Warshow (1948;1975, 127) calls America's commitment to a 'cheerful view of life.' The detective has little confidence in the ostensible upholders of the American way, the defenders of the system. He offers a persistent critique of the system's functioning and its notion of justice, calling into question any monolithic conception of law and order. In the words of Jim Collins (1989, 34):

> ...detective fiction is, more often than not, a discourse which forces contradictions rather than compromises; that is disruptive rather than integrative, because 'justice' is characterized as provisional, incomplete and virtually unenforceable by a State incapable of understanding its complexity. In the process, the 'law and order' pairing is itself destabilized. Once law is subject to multiple definitions, order becomes relative as well, without a master system to coordinate those differences.

In itself, then, the genre enacts a parody of the status quo.

From another perspective, the major destabilizing force in these films is the *femme fatale*, who is, 'as often as not,' says Christine Gledhill (1980, 15) 'the central problem in the unravelling of truth' and her relationship with the hero often usurps the importance of the crime. She is a threat in that she is outside the domestic realm of female identity (Harvey 1980, 22-34). She is narcissistic, ambitious, ruthless, has what Janey Place (1980, 36) describes as 'access to her own sexuality (and thus to men's) and is a consummate performer, flexible, devious, protean, able to parody the stereotypes by which patriarchy seeks to define her, thus casting Salome's veils of deception over the private eye. As Place suggests (48), her presence on screen is frequently so compelling that it overflows the 'narrative explanation' or, in Brigid O'Shaughnessy's case, the framing/taming that marks her end.

The Maltese Falcon (1941) is one of the finest exemplars of the genre. John Huston's directorial debut, it is meticulously designed and perfectly cast. From the opening scene, the camera locates us in the world of Sam Spade (his first name archetypally American, from Uncle Sam to Sam Shepard), as it draws us through dissolves over the Golden Gate Bridge and San Francisco back behind the window with the hero's name, pausing on his head as he deftly rolls the ubiquitous cigarette. Bogart's wry, crackling voice and sharp, amused, rabbit grin control Effie, the secretary, girl Friday, loyal, motherly, indulgent of his sexism ('You'll want to see her - she's a knockout,' she tells Sam, thus preparing us, too, to 'see' Miss Wonderly). Effie is variously addressed by her boss as 'darling,' 'sweetheart,' or 'precious,' until she is drawn into the action at which point her accolade is, 'You're a good man, sister.'

The entrance of the knockout (whose many names are an obvious indicator of her foregrounding as protean actress) is an admirable endorsement of Laura Mulvey's argument (1975; 1986, 198-209) that women in film are presented as images to be looked at by men, the bearers of the gaze, either voyeuristically (with sadistic overtones) or as objects of fetishistic scopophilia. Tall, beautifully dressed, she pauses in the frame of the doorway, bound, too, by the frame of the shot, the eyes of Spade and the eyes of his secretary, in a proleptic image of her final entrapment behind the bars of the lift that carries her to prison. As she tells her story (later, she will 'confess' that it was 'just a story'), her deep modulated tones and crisp enunciation conflict with her rapid, nervous, declarative sentences and her shifting eyes, her presentation of herself on trial before the cool listening profile of Spade that dominates one side of the screen. (Kaminsky points out that reaction is often more important than *what* is being said [1978, 25]). When Archer enters, she is the focal point of one of the many triangular formations in the film, highlighting the contrary responses of the two men: Miles's lecherous gullibility is his death, while Spade's succinct recap of Brigid's story subsumes her self-construction and puts her in her place ('Is that right?' 'Yes,' she meekly replies).

Even on her own territory, Brigid must yield to the penetrating gaze of Sam. In a room teeming with striped patterns (the blinds, the upholstery, her robe - decor prefiguring the bars of the lift once more), she finds that neither her words nor her manner can deceive him, for his streetwise cynicism reads the tale of her money. In a scene structured on the rhythms of sitting and standing, both contest control of screen space as she tries another role - that of the vulnerable damsel in distress, flattering Spade's sense of honour. 'You're brave. You're strong,' she throbs up at him as his poker face breaks into an appreciative grin. 'You're good,' he mocks her.

Later, Spade accuses her of play-acting the schoolgirl. 'I've been bad' she admits. 'You're good,' he tells her again, but her confidence has grown and she ignores him, leading him on with her sexuality: 'What else can I buy you with?' He kisses her and, as in the second seduction scene, there is a displacement of verbal performance and deceit with sexuality, thus threatening Sam's self-sufficient integrity. He asks her how much truth there was in her version of the falcon's history and she laughs, 'Some, not very much.' This performance of candour is almost entirely disarming, for Spade and us, and even her contrived angst ('I'm so tired of not knowing what is lie and what truth') cannot diminish the allure of her invitation. It is important that this moment is a culmination of a scene where Spade has demonstrated his own superlative ability to perform, to lie, to tell stories that dupe (in his case, the bumbling police). It is central to the genre that the private eye's understanding of the criminal mind enables him to behave like one - always, of course, in the interests of a nobler cause. So Brigid's challenge to his integrity ('Would you be doing this if the falcon had been real?') wins the response, 'Don't be too sure I'm as crooked as I'm supposed to be. That's good for business.' The one role he refuses to play is that of the 'sap,' and he denies her voice in the final scene ('Wait till I'm through, then you can talk'), while he dominates centre screen to articulate his credo, a credo based largely on loyalty to his (male) partner. 'You're taking the fall,' he tells her - that is all a fallen woman can do, and all women are fallen sisters of that first traitress.

Whether the artist is male or female, breaking out of the formulaic presentation of gender while adhering to overall generic structuring necessitates an imagination alive to the possibilities of parody, play and performance, already implicit in the roles of the detective and the *femme fatale*. (Similarly, whether the viewer is male or female, the ability to read parodic texts against their target texts and to read for the playful insurrections that subvert many of the texts apparently most at home in mainstream popular culture, demands openness, flexibility and a pleasure in plural meanings). On the one hand, parody is allied to imitation. It is a form that speaks belatedness. Whether it suffers anxiety on this account or not depends on whether it is seen simply as parasitic, as a sign of the cannibalizing failure of artistic forms to renew themselves, or as a sign of cannibalization in more mythic terms - eating the father to ensure one's continuing strength, absorbing past forms in order to ensure regeneration. Margaret Rose (1979) points out that 'parodia' implies both 'nearness and opposition' (33) and suggests that parody 'makes the object of attack part of its own structure, and thus also depends in part on the reader's conditioned reaction to this object of attack for the response to itself' (35).

Using Foucault's analysis of *Don Quixote* as a focus, she goes on to argue that parody 'may fulfil a heuristic function in changing, or developing, the reader's horizon of expectations, while also serving the author in the task of freeing himself from earlier models' (63). It shows 'the process of literary creation to be unfinished and open for further development' (83) and, even more, it reveals the possibility of 'initiating a revolutionary break in the discourse of its age through the meta-fictional criticism of other texts' (129). Its revolutionary potential is enacted at the levels of author, text and reader (or director, film, viewer). Linda Hutcheon (1985) also emphasises parody's Janus-faced nature, looking backward, often with affection, but also forward in the desire for new meanings: 'It is not a matter of nostalgic imitation of past models; it is a stylistic confrontation, a modern recoding which establishes difference at the heart of similarity' (8).

The intertextuality at the heart of parody allies it with ideas of performance and play. In the case of the former, the artifice is foregrounded. The parody enacts the shapes that structure its target text. The space opened for this parodic performance is made possible by the liberating, open-endedness of play, what Huizinga (1949, 7) called 'a voluntary activity' dependent on human freedom, 'a flowering, an ornament, a garment' spread over nature. Playing with texts is part of postmodernist performance heralded most spectacularly in literature, as Charles Caramello points out (1977, 221), by *Finnegan's Wake*, with the heirs of Dada making their presence felt from John Cage and Merce Cunningham to Laurie Anderson, from Méliès to Godard and Monty Python. Generic boundaries are broken, as are the boundaries between art and life, writer and reader, and, one might argue, masculine and feminine.

The commitment to play as liberatory action has taken on special resonance for feminist theorists. In the realm of film studies, many critics have used the idea both overtly and covertly, to attack the rigidities of the psychoanalytic model promulgated by Mulvey, Bellour, Kristeva, Kaplan et al, especially with regard to the female spectator. Jackie Stacey (1988, 119-120) raises the problems succinctly:

> If we do argue that women differ from men in their relation to visual constructions of femininity, then further questions are generated for feminist film theory: do all women have the same relationship to images of themselves? Is there only one feminine spectator position? How do we account for diversity, contradiction or resistance within this category

> of feminine spectatorship?
>
> This problem arises in relation to all cultural systems in which women have been defined as 'other' within patriarchal discourses: how can we express the extent of women's oppression without denying femininity any room to manoeuvre (Mulvey, 1975), defining women as complete victims of patriarchy (Bellour, 1979), or as totally other to it (Doane, 1982)? ...the female spectator is offered ...masculinisation, masochism or marginality.

Shelagh Young (1988, 188) defends the possibility of a female gaze and argues that we should explore the 'inroads' that have been made by women's looks and voices into mainstream popular culture, rather than bewail the lack of 'icons' that would simply imprison us in a monolithic code of feminist strategy. She suggests that the belief in the unstable, socially contructed 'subject in process' allows for a more playful, less lugubrious outlook on the very evident conflicts between different 'feminist' positions' (185). The postmodernist phase of feminism demands a pleasure in play rather than the unpleasure of Laura Mulvey's propagation of anti-mainstream puritanism (Gamman 1988, 24). Protean, in process, the female spectator need not subscribe to Mulvey's (1990, 35) assertions that the only way she can engage in pleasurable viewing is to accept temporary 'masculinization' in memory of her 'active' phase' and then to find her 'phantasy of masculinization at cross-purposes with itself, restless in its transvestite clothes.' Transvestism should be seen, rather, as an image of playful liminality.

Turning to Roman Polanski's *Chinatown* (1974) engages us in two questions. Is the film a parody or merely an exercise in nostalgia? Cawelti (1979, 567) argues for the former, although he admits that the tragic ambience involves stretching the term 'parody'. Jameson (1983, 116) sees it as the latter, but admires the film and, like Cawelti, feels a terminological anxiety. The second question revolves around the presentation of Evelyn Mulwray. To what extent does Polanski, a male artist after all, make subversive inroads into mainstream construction of female images, thus giving spectators, male and female, fresh entries into cinematic viewing?

Cawelti (1979, 559-568) has pointed out the central areas of generic parody in the film. Instead of black and white, we have colour (Shadoian [1977, 210] argues that colour results in a flattening out of the moral spectrum evoked by black and white - evil becomes endemic); instead of claustrophobia we have expansive outdoors scenes; instead of a hero with whom we laugh, we have a hero at whom we laugh (and a police detective who isn't dumb); instead of a guilty woman at the centre of the film, we have an innocent one and, finally, we have a catastrophic ending that leaves the private eye with knowledge but no power, as the force of evil retreats once more into protective darkness.

Perhaps the most interesting scene is that where Jake Gittes has his nose cut. Having almost drowned in a flood of water, the beleaguered private eye limps, one shoe lost, towards the fence where he is halted by the rasping, foreign accents of the runtish 'man with a knife,' Roman Polanski himself. Having sliced Gittes' nose, the 'midget' threatens him: 'Next time you lose the whole thing. I cut it off and feed it to my goldfish' and half-smiles, looking up obliquely towards the camera. Polanski, the creator of this parodic detective, performs the symbolic emasculation of his creature. As the 'man with a knife,' his role harks back to his first feature film, *Knife in the Water* (1961), and he intrudes into a film that at once pays homage to another director's first feature film and features that director as the father in whom all power is vested, John Huston. (Polanski's foregrounded 'midget' status is another ironic pointer to his own belatedness, while he nevertheless thumbs his revised detective's nose at the generic father). This is the scene, then, of Polanski's castrating signature, marking the ironic renovation of the detective for a postmodernist world.

Although this scene occurs some way into the film, Jake's dubious status as heir to Bogey is demonstrated from the beginning. As Cawelti points out (1979, 565), the traditional private eye considered it a matter of honour not to engage in divorce cases, and the first thing we see in Polanski's film is photographic evidence of Jake's successful trailing of an unfaithful wife (setting up the image of woman as treacherous). More than that, he takes professional pride in what he describes as the 'finesse' needed for his 'matrimonial work,' his 'metiér.' This pretentious indulgence in euphemism is complemented by his unctuous apologies for crude language in the presence of Evelyn.

His occupational and linguistic taintedness seems to affect his perception, too - Jake is a very bad reader. The film foregrounds the acts of seeing and reading in countless ways: Jake and his binoculars dominate one side of the screen as he watches Mulwray; he 'shoots' Mulwray and Catherine in Echo Park and at the El Macondo, taking photographs which he will misinterpret, as he will fail to recognize the significance of those given him of Mulwray and Cross arguing. He will also misread the evidence of the salt water that is 'bad for the glass,' arrogantly assuming knowledge of the ownership of the bifocals. Clear vision and the truth of the image are thus called into question, both as a function of a duplicitous world and, importantly, as a function of Jake's ineptitude in that world. That he is continually denied a simple reading of Evelyn is inevitable. He seeks to appropriate her to his limited range of 'meanings for women' (Ida Sessions is a 'broad,' his secretary a 'little girl'), just as his phallic zoom lens seeks to appropriate reality while maintaining a safe distance from it ('Photographing is essentially an act of non-intervention,' writes Susan Sontag [1977, 11]). He enters vicariously, voyeuristically into the mystery of others' lives and will discover, in the shock and horror of the film's climax, that, although photography 'implies that we know about the world if we accept it as the camera records it...this is the opposite of understanding, which starts from *not* accepting the world as it looks. All possibility of understanding is rooted in the ability to say no' (Sontag 1977, 23). Jake learns to say no to his misogynist myopia when it is too late.

Polanski structures his critique of Jake with great care. Notably, the first time we see Evelyn Mulwray, we join her, the camera and the 'associates' to look at Jake, who is making an idiot of himself in his clumsy telling of a joke that is both racist and misogynist (and whose content, sex and China, will take on a powerful aura of fateful repetition as the film progresses). His clownishness is trapped between the resigned sighs of his associates, rendered dominant by the low angle of the camera, and the expressionless, controlled and aristocratic gaze of the waiting Mrs Mulwray. 'Do you know me?' she asks him in measured, ironic tones, and it is a question that is to reverberate throughout the film, long after her departure from his office, in a compelling movement that cuts across his professional space and the screen.

Her photographed image in riding gear next to a horse prepares us for the scene in her garden, tousled and sweating from an early-morning bare-back ride. Her own sexual potency and link to the western myth of space and energy are thus suggested. Jake, on the other hand, resents finding *himself* with his 'pants down' and in the position of one whose word is doubted. Trying to read the face of Evelyn, he ignores all the important verbal signs, notably her angry insistence that the truth is 'very personal, more personal than you could know.' Instead, he insists on reading the mystery in public terms (in the end private and public intersect in the figure of the demon god of water and drought, incestuous fertility and moral sterility, Noah Cross, mock saviour of the desert city of angels). The scene ends with the camera lingering on Evelyn's perturbed face, as it will close on her tortured profile outside the restaurant when her call to Jake is shut out by the screech of his tyres. This shot focuses our concern and our pain on Evelyn, while Gittes' cavalier tactics seem more and more inexcusable. The questions he has asked her prove to be the wrong ones (except, significantly, the one concerning her 'maiden' name) and encourage her tale of adultery, giving him an identity he can understand. She manages the tale with consummate ease and sophistication, the white mask of her face rendered more ambiguous by the black net veil. Close-ups of Evelyn dominate their next scene together, one where Jake begins to recognize the interweaving of public and private crime ('Was the fight over you or the water department,' he wants to know). Her mask begins to give way as she falters on the word 'father' (she will do so again when she has to pronounce 'sister' and 'flaw,' the black spot in her green iris, the trauma, the birthmark, the curse at the heart of the American dream of the family that cannot be spoken).

The pain and fragility with which Dunaway invests this scene is in marked contrast to the stagey presence of Mary Astor, and alerts us to the greater complexity of the character. Her vulnerability is manifested even more clearly when, seated naked on the edge of the bed, she tries to tell Jake of her father's ownership of Albacor. Jake tells her that he has seen her father and her face constricts in hurt bewilderment as her hands come up to cross her breasts in a pathetic gesture of self-protection. She warns him that Cross is dangerous (as Gutman had warned Spade about Brigid) and when Jake asks 'Is he behind all this?' she replies 'It's possible.' 'Even your husband's death?' 'It's possible', she repeats, in a proleptic image of Jake, disbelieving, devastated, looking at her dead body. 'It's still possible,' he whispers.

It is possible partly, at least, because of Jake's increasing ruthlessness. He misreads the scene of mother and child, he mocks 'all this secrecy,' when Evelyn 'confesses' that the girl is her sister (her head crashing, proleptically, on the hooter), he denies her emotional support with an air of injured self-righteousness and, once more, the camera lingers on her face, lacerated by shadows. When she makes her climactic confession, the scene is unbearable. Jake's violent machismo is presented in the most shockingly brutal way as he punctuates her cries of 'daughter,' 'sister' with explosive blows. Her contempt as she explains, 'My father and I - understand? Or is it too tough for you?' works powerfully against his recently evidenced toughness. Even so, he tries to apprehend the horror of it by calling it rape. Evelyn's response is ambiguous. Critics generally go along with Jake, but she raises her head to look at him pleadingly and then shake it. Seduction then? Like Tess, another of Polanski's heroines, she is suspended forever between exoneration and condemnation. Jake's repellant assertion of male authority is further undercut by her throwaway comment: 'Those didn't belong to Hollis - he didn't wear bifocals.' For once, the camera lingers ironically on Jake's collapsing face, as *Evelyn* moves away. She brings her daughter down to greet Jake, and, in one of the most startling point of view shots, we look down with them - he is a diminished thing.

The last terrible scene presents the inevitable repetition of catastrophe. The aural echo of the hooter announces Evelyn's death before we see her, her flawed eye a gaping hole. She becomes the scapegoat, as the source of all possibility gathers the future in his arms. After all, Cross had told Jake it was the future he wanted.

Polanski's parody of the genre yields open-endedness and the suggestion that the mystery of being and the crimes of the heart are beyond any detective's penetration. *Jake's* search for the father, on the other hand, has resulted in knowledge that is a curse. If all detective stories, like Oedipus, are in search of origins, of the primal scene (Cawelti 1976, 134), then Jake, like Oedipus, uncovers a secret, a secret of the failure of Oedipal resolution that taints an entire landscape. Or, in another turn, like the son of the Biblical Noah, he sees the father naked and is forever a marked man. The inevitability of his knowledge, the fatefulness that stains so many of the scenes, the way in which all finally converges on Chinatown as the locus (like the woman) of the marginal, the mysterious and the taboo, points to Polanski's vision of the horror of repetition, the drive backwards to an original state of chaos. Maureen Turim calls this *film noir's* tendency to 'create a romance of the death drive, unmitigated by any will to survive ' (1989, 175).

As parody, the film is, in itself, a repetition and, with its sombre ending, it appears to have nothing to do with the lighter aspects of parody and play. Nevertheless, in its uncovering to criticism of the masculine (e)rectitude of the private eye/dick, in revealing moral corruption in the father, *Chinatown* observes difference at the heart of similarity and in that difference preserves the space for a very serious kind of play regarding the woman. She remains the focal point of the mystery but, through the critical treatment of Gittes, through the horrifying revelation of the father's power and through the strength and complexity of her own presence on the screen, both verbally and visually, constantly foregrounded in close-ups, Polanski enacts the truth behind the treatment of all Evelyn's *film noir* sisters, enacts the genre's misogyny, performs for us, with a fierce clarity, the woman's victimization by patriarchy.

There is no denying the playfulness of *The Big Easy* (1986), or its straightforward Hollywood sweetness-and-light. To what extent, then, is there parody? To what extent does the playfulness become a play with form and perception that opens up new spaces for men and women?

Generically, it bridges what Solomon (1976, 200-214) defines as the police investigation film and the private investigator film. As a policeman, Remy McSwain is a member of an organization, conducting his work in orthodox ways, but, becoming disenchanted with the corruption of the force, he turns into a private investigator, independent, working by his wits and fighting against the odds in the showdown. As a policeman, he upholds the system, law and order; as a private detective, he discovers the cracks in the system and experiences personal moral anguish, finally tracking down the criminals and taking on the roles of judge and executioner. The special interest of the film, however, derives from the Cajun setting and soundtrack, and the portrayal of Remy and Ann Osborne, the district attorney.

The film opens to exotic accents and energetic rhythms keeping pace with the exuberant forward thrust of the zoom shot across the bayous to the delta around New Orleans, the landscape beginning in the wild, primitive reaches of the swamps and growing more and more modern, built-up, until we look down on the sharp geometric patterns and garish lighting of the Piazza d'Italia. The sequence suggests the conflict between an idealized image of America when the world was young and America grown old in corruption. It also suggests the conflict between the Cajun community and family values, and modern alienation, with morality rooted in abstraction and anonymity. This polarization is problematized, however, in the development of the relationship between Ann and Remy.

That Remy will be the central focus of the narrative is made abundantly clear from his first twirl to face the cameras with his impish grin and Cajun accent. That we are to find Ann reduced to the object of his gaze appears tryingly evident when we first see her profile, hair neatly put up, bespectacled, framed by Remy's office window (her occupation of his office and, after his redemption, his police shirt, can be read as a more creative assertion of her values and her being, though). Remy's response is predictable: 'Nice neck,' he says. The split between Ann's personal and professional capacities is made apparent. As a person, she is disoriented by him, clumsy, nervous, but with a ready smile and a great seriousness about her work as upholder of the ideals of the system, a seriousness Remy spends the first half of the film trying to undermine.

At the level of language, he mocks her use of 'obsequious' and teaches her that the Mafia are known as 'wiseguys': 'You're not from here, are you?' he taunts. He is willing to abuse the person in order to undermine the professional by trying to win information over a Cajun meal (she corrects his use of Mafia this time - she is, after all, a fast learner). He ridicules her sense of right, insisting on the chasm between the law and life on the street, where there are 'good guys' and 'bad guys,' and childishly runs a red light. As Chapman (1988, 244-245) notes, acerbically, when Ann's courage brings down a mugger, she still finds herself having to be rescued by Remy; when they make love, he has to relax her; when she sees her first murdered bodies, he tends to her as she throws up. More, when her newly flourishing sexuality tries to express itself in a playful clutch, from behind, of the crotch of her lover, she is the butt of comedy as Remy's brother turns round. During Remy's court-case, Ann is once more cheated, upstaged and made a fool of.

The Cajun party that follows marks the turning point, however. Ann, hijacked to be there, cannot be won over by the community's too-easy acceptance of deviant codes (Mrs McSwain fully endorses Lamar's reputation for getting wrongdoers acquitted), and Remy has become one of the 'bad guys.' The shock of the term, as applied to him, initiates his moral regeneration and he finally confronts the truth about the corruption at the heart of the family, in the father/father pretender, Jack. In this carefully constructed scene, Jack is in uniform, Remy in jeans and a soft blue sweatshirt, seated on a swing; the rain falls gently in the children's playfield and Jack reveals and tries to excuse his nefarious deeds, pleading for Remy's blessing on his union with Mrs McSwain. The implicit Oedipal scenario immediately erupts in violence as Remy downs Jack, shouting, 'If you ever touch my mother again, I'll kill you!' This is the precursor to Jack's death and Remy's marriage. So we find a tale of growing up, moving out of the unquestioned comfort and protection of one family into a new formation of one's own. It is also a tale of the purging of that family, both Cajun and Cop, to the sounds of throbbing black voices singing 'Saviour, Pass Me Not.' (Significantly, regeneration doesn't extend to the 'wiseguys,' who carry on their merry way).

Ann, hearing Remy's confession in her Madonna-blue dressing gown, is more than an agent for moral rehabilitation, however. Looked at from a different perspective, her image in the first half of the film is one of WASP frigidity warmed by gumbo, dancing and the very tender ministrations of the 'new man.' 'Didn't you dance where you come from?' 'We barely spoke,' she answers. It is also worth noting that Dennis Quaid is presented to the audience as object of desire in quite explicit terms. He is frequently shirtless, once completely naked and his physical appearance defines male attractiveness more playfully than Stallone and company have ever thought of doing. His camp hand gestures, his alligator toys, his jewellery, his slenderness, his self-parodic performance as seducer, as 'swain' (his cha-cha routine, for example, or his deliberate filling of Ann's glass, leaving hardly a drop in his - even she laughs), imply a breakdown of simplistically defined masculine imagery. Suzanne Moore (1988, 56) suggests that 'what seems to be going on...is the disavowal of phallic presence - these men are not presented as all-powerful but as objects of pleasure and desire.' (It is also worth noting that, where *Siesta* (1987) and *Sea of Love* (1989) make Ellen Barkin the overt centre of soft-porn imagery, in *The Big Easy* we see very little of her flesh except her legs in running shorts).

Ann is given her own private moments on the screen. Her attraction and irritation are finely and comically rendered when she walks from the shops, pulling faces to herself, replaying her scenes with Remy; her anger and hurt are registered as she sits alone, defacing the newspaper featuring the trial, with classical music in the background. And, in the latter part of the film, her integrity reaps rewards. As she and Remy pursue Daddy Mention's killers, she no longer stumbles, but shins up a wall and, with perfect aim, hurls a brick at the windscreen of the unmarked cop car ('Good shot,' Remy congratulates her. 'Thank you,' she calmly replies). Remy's acceptance of her greater knowledge is a further turnabout. She now motivates the action. 'Must I go undercover in my own precinct?' he asks. 'I have a better idea,' she replies and they make a clean sweep of the police files. She becomes the detective (or perhaps she has been so all along). Her visual style is erect, forceful, clear-sighted. Listening to Remy's confession, she is warm, sensual and mothering, but also clear-headed and imaginative. Staring fixedly at the river, she says, 'Let's look at this another way' - her fresh perception leads to the capture and demise of the villains, synchronized with a non-Cajun thriller soundtrack. (Significantly, Jack's shot saves her life, a kind of blessing on her as she fills a different space in the Cajun family).

The symmetries of the penultimate scene suggest either a too easy closure, or the underlining of the film's argument for finding middle ground where differing principles might renew and give pleasure to each other. So her replay of his derriere-tickling routine, or of his 'dirty, no-good, rotten cop' routine or of his definition of his world ('This the big easy dahlin'. Folks have a certain way of doin' things down here') both parodies him and asserts her own playful rediscovery of self. The strength of her presence is demonstrated, too, in the wedding waltz. A Cajun soundtrack accompanies their dance, but in *her* apartment, with its light airy sophistication. The bouquet and garter are thrown to the guests beyond the frame and the focus remains on a couple whose differences have involved a mutual revitalization.

Whether we read backward or forward between *Don Quixote* and Borges, *Ulysses* and *The Odyssey*, Whitman, Ginsberg and Morrison, Lorca and Leonard Cohen, Lord Randal, Rimbaud and Bob Dylan, John Cleland, Daniel Defoe and Erica Jong, or Mary Shelley and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, playing off difference against sameness, parody encourages in the viewer an engagement with older texts, reading their meanings in ever regenerative ways, while the parodies themselves open up formulaic genres to the play of difference in a changing world, contributing to its protean transformations. With the detective, we read clues, we make meanings, we create worlds. ■

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'I Shall Become A Bat!' - The Identity of Batman

James A. Sey

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This paper is subtitled, in tribute to the great Stanley Kubrick, 'How I learned to stop worrying and love crap movies', and I hope by the end of it, it will be clear why.

In 1989, Hollywood released the first ever big budget screen treatment of one of the comic world's most enduring and recognizable characters - the Batman. After one of the industry's more memorable publicity campaigns, the film opened to become the quickest grossing movie ever. It went on to become also one of the biggest grossing movies ever, amassing takings of some $400-million (an amount surely enough to feed the Third World for a generation, or at least float another multi-national corporation). This is significant in itself. What is perhaps more interesting is the extent to which *Batman* - the movie, already a production of 'popular culture', became pervasively commodified, in suitably spectacular fashion. Rare it was, in the heady days following the movie's release in the summer of '89, to find someone without a Batman bumper-sticker, T-shirt, tracksuit, toy batmobile, Batman fluffy slippers and Zap! Pow! boxer shorts.

At the time, I was puzzled. The comics, though popular, do not have the audience of the Wilbur Smiths of the world. From being an assured, arrogantly marginalized Bat-o-phile, I was reduced to heaping disdain on ignorant, bandwagon-jumping philistines. But this was not enough. The question remained: Why was *Batman* so popular?

What interested me at first was the relation between *Batman* the movie and its ostensible (and self-confessed) origins in *Batman* the comic. The movie's scriptwriter, the incredibly aptly-named Sam Hamm, had acknowledged the influence of a recent series of Batman stories, collectively entitled *The Dark Knight Returns*. But simple transference in form, medium or content could not adequately explain the sudden popularity of a very marginal art-form.

Here we have dangerous ground. What do I mean by 'popular culture'? How is *Batman* the movie a production within its field? And what is the status of the difference between Batman as a function of the discourse of the comic and Batman as a function of the discourse of Hollywood narrative film?

Colin MacCabe identifies five strategies for the analysis of popular culture. In this paper I shall be guilty of two of them: what MacCabe calls 'The intellectual's case' (1986, pp. vii) and 'The proletarian appeal' (1986, pp. viii). the first 're-finds the terms of high culture where you least expect them' (1986, pp. vii), presumably theoretical terms of evaluative analysis, and the second 'lays emphasis on areas of social reality unavailable to high art', in this case the social realities of reading comics and going to the cinema. MacCabe quotes Tony Bennet's definition of popular culture as 'a way of specifying areas of resistance to dominant ideological forms.' This is a useful definition, since it specifies ideology as central to a notion of popular culture, but it is also too specifically political. The idea of 'resistance' leads to a somewhat reductionist view of popular culture and ideology, the 'us' of the masses opposed to a sinister 'them' who attempt to keep 'us' in our place by giving us what we think we want. To a certain extent this is the view of the Frankfurt School, with their contemptuous references to a 'culture industry' and an 'advertising aesthetics' which were rigorously opposed to 'real art'. The masses were being misled into 'bad art' by the subversion of bourgeois capitalism.

For my purposes, there are two reasons why such a view of culture is untenable. Firstly, it proposes a binary opposition between 'high culture' and 'low', or 'popular' culture, where the presence of one implies the absence of the other. In terms of the cultural machinery of the cinema this kind of opposition is dramatized, for example, by erecting 'art movie' complexes in upper income or 'bohemian' locations. Secondly it denies by omission the point which Laura Kipnis makes very forcefully:

> ...that there is no transcendent, privileged cultural space on which to stand that is *outside* capitalist reification. There is...particularly no such space that is guaranteed ... through particular cultural, aesthetic or textual practices (Kitnis 1986, pp. 28).

These reasons are imbricated with each other, but this is not a turn to the nihilism of cultural overdetermination. In this context, it means my position as commentator on Batman the production of popular culture is imbricated with my position as fan of Batman the superhero.

In order to acknowledge these determinisms and yet comment on an object that is also a cultural production, I must become an analysing subject, the subject analysing its own subjectivity and object relations, in this case relations with cultural machines called films. This is a psychoanalytic turn. It is the position also of Metz's ardent young cinephile, justifying in the terms of intellectual analysis the object with which she has such a relation of unquestioning pleasure. As Metz puts it:

> ... the id does not bring its own super-ego with it, it is not enough to be happy, ...unless one is sure one has a right to be happy. (Metz 1977, pp. 11)

Pleasure therefore, has a social mediation. The popularity of Batman is inscribed in relations of production and consumption which have their origins in pleasure. Metz links this to the institution of pleasure, to the ideological function of pleasure. Though he talks here of the cinema specifically, the point he makes can be extended to other 'aesthetic or textual practices' which delineate and delimit popular culture.

> In a social system ... the spectator is not forced physically to go to the cinema but.. it is still important that he should go so that the money he pays .. ensures the auto-reproduction of the institution... it is the specific characteristic of every true institution that it takes charge of the mechanisms of its own perpetuation. (Metz 1977, pp. 7)

We go to see Batman because we wish to be entertained and the aim of Batman is to entertain us. Metz, following Melanie Klein, calls this 'good object relations' between viewer and film. We experience pleasure only because a prior desire existed and is somehow gratified. A whole institution (which is also an industry and thus develops with the rise of capitalism) is structured around the pleasurable gratification of this desire. This is the well-oiled running of the desiring-machine (Deleuze and Guattari's term) that is cinema. But is the subject gratified? What is the place of the viewing subject in this machine?

> To a certain degree, the traditional logic of desire is all wrong from the very outset, pp. from the very first step that the Platonic logic of desire forces us to take, making us choose between *production* and *acquisition*. From the moment that we place desire on the side of acquisition, we make desire an idealistic..conception, which causes us to look on it as primarily a lack, pp. a lack of...the real object. (Deleuze & Guattari 1984, pp. 25)

Desire, in this conception, is not contingent on lack. Instead, Desire produces the subject. The subject, as Deleuze and Guattari put it, becomes a 'desiring-machine':

> Desire does not lack anything; it does not lack its object. It is, rather, the *subject* that is missing in desire, or desire that lacks a fixed subject;..(Deleuze &Guttari 1984, pp. 26)

This capitalized Desire (pun intended) is analogous to Lacan's capitalized Other, a signifier perhaps best expressed in the gaze which inscribes the viewing subject as a 'desiring-machine'. If we are to understand the relation between ideology,the machine of popular cultural production and the experiencing subject, it is this desire which holds the key.

We must also know where to look. Batman is a movie and a comic. Are desire and pleasure the same in both?

Comics as a literary form have an interesting ideological history. Martin Barker traces their origin to the Penny Dreadfuls of Victorian England, a cheap, accessible form of readily consumable entertainment for a burgeoning urban proletariat. They contained stories based on the Gothic romances of the time, or on working class heroes championing the cause of the proletariat, like Wat Tyler. The Bourgeoisie attempted to suppress the comics either on the grounds that they were harmful to their audience (subverting their morals) or escapist (lack of moral content). For a full account see Barker, 1989.

These criticisms did not ostensibly change as the comics grew more widespread. Batman started life in the 1930s as a 'Detective Comic', a sub-genre specializing in thrilling tales of prohibition era crime and punishment. In the 1950s EC comics in America started a range of horror comics which provoked a McCarthyist backlash against the industry. The bulk of the comics' audience were children - horror comics depicting vampires, werewolves and murder would be harmful to them to the extent that the audience identified with the comics' narrative events. The right to control those events had to be dictated by a responsibility to the audience, so that their identification was not with potentially harmful or perverse values and events. From the 1950s until the 1980s, this responsibility was ensured by the stamp of approval of the 'Comics Code Authority', and Batman was a shining example of the sanitary superhero. Mark Cotta Vaz's book *Tales of the Dark Knight* (1989) usefully traces this fascinating history, and draws interesting parallels between the comics of the so-called 'Golden Age' and the contemporaneous heyday of classical Hollywood narrative film.

Part of the problem for anyone wishing to change the way comics were viewed, as diversions for children, was in the visual nature of the medium itself. Comics are 'read' by looking at the pictures. But there are certain formulaic observances which make this looking different from looking at photographs, for example. There are lines indicating movement, frames or panels arranged in a certain manner to ensure a linear unfolding of narrative, and the visual techniques of speech balloons of varying sizes and shapes to indicate emotion. Comics, therefore, are highly conventionalized narratives. For a long time they have anticipated some of the techniques of post modernist fiction; the interreferentiality with other comics, narrative mise-en-abyme, the inclusion (and eradication) of the author/artist in the narrative, characters drawing or erasing themselves, etc. This has never been seen as radical, even in the 1930s, just as harmless comic-strip fun.

For the comics to grow up and compete with other fictional forms, they had to become adult. For Batman this meant a turn to graphic realism. In 1986 Frank Miller wrote and drew a special limited edition Batman story called *The Dark Knight Returns*. It became a best-seller and sparked off a sub-genre of 'adult comics' called 'graphic novels'. The book, published without the Comics Code Authority stamp of approval, attempted to break the over-formulaic nature of the superhero story by putting Batman into the so-called real world. No longer is the Batman a perpetual 26-ish, morally unambiguous, swift, clean and deadly to wrongdoers. He is now in his 50s, heavier, drinking too much, menopausal, and hasn't fought crime for ten years. What's more, when he does start his vigilante pursuits again, he is clearly pathological. We are treated to interior monologues placed in luridly coloured speech balloons with none of the conventional indices of speaker or thinker, wherein the Batman muses in minute detail about the most painful way he can disarm the thug he is creeping up on.

What is more interesting is that in the attempt to render the Batman graphic narrative more 'realistically' Miller and his team approximate cinematic techniques of representation, thus returning to an affinity the media have long shared. There is obviously no apparent motion, but the reader of the comic is invited to view the story *like a film*. Techniques borrowed from the cinema include flashback, point of view cuts, zoom shots through a whole page of panels, panning shots, and visual reference by characters in frame to characters out of frame, i.e. they look out of the frame.

These techniques are used to break the code of the formulaic comics narrative and to represent the Batman graphically in the same way as he is represented at the level of narrative plot, that is, realistically. The move presupposes that the cinema is a mode of unmediated representation. As we approach Batman the movie, we must ask the subject why this is.

The viewer sees as the camera sees, and it can only see what is there to be seen. It must, therefore, be realistic. Metz disagrees:

> ... a little rolled up perforated strip which 'contains' vast landscapes,... and whole lifetimes, and yet can be enclosed in the familiar round metal tin,... clear proof that it does not 'really' contain all that. (Metz 1977, pp. 44)

In cinema the absence of the real object is the filmic representation of it, which is still a contract between viewer and viewed. There is a dual or dialectical process here. The subject perceives plenitude but also absence:

> ...the cinema involves us in the imaginary, it drums up all perception, but to switch it immediately over into its own absence, which is nonetheless the only signifier present. (Metz 1977, pp. 45)

The Imaginary in Lacan is the realm of identity; of an illusory wholeness, since the subject is always already in the symbolic realm. Metz says of the subject: 'At the cinema, it is always the other who is on the screen; as for me I am there to look at him'. The subject at the cinema is no longer constituted as the object of another's gaze, since the screen cannot look back. The viewing subject is in this instance a transcendental subject. This is the pleasure of the cinema. It elides the position of the subject as also object, function of the gaze, one term in the dialectic of subject/object, desire and lack. The dialectic, however, must be understood as a function of the desiring-machine, the machine of capitalized Desire.

As Lacan puts it,

> ...of all the objects in which the subject may recognize his dependence in the register of desire, the gaze is specified as unapprehensible. (Lacan 1979, pp. 83)

The gaze is the unconscious assertion of the subject's alterity, of its position in the symbolic realm as split. Pleasure in the cinema both as cultural institution (ideological apparatus) and as diverse cultural production depends on identity, which Laplanche and Pontalis define as

> the ... process whereby the subject assimilates an aspect, attribute or property of the other and is transformed wholly or partially after the model the other provides. (Laplanche and Pontalis 1980, pp. 205)

But identity and desire cannot exist in the same place, since the latter is constituted by lack. The transcendental subject needs another identity which Metz specifies as identification with the camera. If the viewer assumes the position of the camera, control is assumed over the film's gaze but the monocular perspective of the film, its depth of field illusion, is maintained as apparently real (Metz 1977, pp. 49-51).

Frank Miller, in order to make his graphic novel a desirable object, must approximate this process for his adult reader. The potentially more profound subversions of narrative which comics have long indulged in and which we mentioned earlier are left safely with children, since after all children are not properly constituted subjects.

Batman the movie does more than nod in the direction of Miller's novel, however. In certain respects it is able to take aspects of the novel's cinematic approximations and turn them into a profound narrative enactment of the processes of gaze, identity and ideology I have been attempting to sketch.

One of the most immediate of these enactments is the character of the Batman himself. In common with most comic superheroes, Batman has an alter-ego. It is Bruce Wayne, charming, easygoing, mild-mannered playboy millionaire. Also as in other cases, Batman's alter-ego is just that - an ego which represents the other, everything the Batman is not. The split in Batman as subject thus defeats the establishment of the other in the gaze of the subject - the *objet petit a* in the Lacanian algebra. Batman contains his own alterity, but effaces the split just as the subject elides the function of the gaze - his attempt (as Bruce Wayne) to tell his lover, journalist Vicki Vale, that he is Batman fails because it is literally inarticulable for him.

This transcendental subjectivity gives the character the almost mystical power of the superhero. Bruce Wayne inhabits Wayne Manor, an edifice of imposing but restrained wealth, yet is never seen to work, nor is he seen to invest in shares, etc. The relations of production are mystified, appropriated to the imperiously self-contained alterity of the Batman.

Bruce Wayne and the Batman control power on the narrative level of the film, and, through the use of a guiding scopic motif, control power on the psychic level of the film also. The motif, of course, is that of the viewer and the screen.

In Miller's graphic novel, the action of the narrative is frequently intercut by panels on the page representing television screens, where the use of cut-up montage represents a series of news reports on television, debates by psychologists on whether or not Batman is a lunatic vigilante, etc. The film retains the idea of televisual reference, but not only for the purposes of plot.

The uses of the television screen in the film are generally split into two groups, which we might call external and internal.

The first, the external use of TV, is the domain of the Batman's arch enemy, the Joker. As a character, the Joker's lunacy is overwhelming. As a subject, his lunacy is a function of his inability to contain his own other in the way the Batman does. The Joker's other is Jack Napier, a psychopathic thug who falls into a vat of chemicals to emerge with green hair, deathly white skin and a fixed rictus grin. The Joker spends the rest of the movie attempting to reduce everyone else (that is, all other subjects who are also objects) to his own state of hideous disfigurement. It is the supreme narcissistic projection, a psychosis which combines megalomania with an admirable understanding of the essentials of mass media manipulation. In possibly the best sequence of the film, the Joker and his gang of hip-hop hooligans stylishly deface every work of art in Gotham City's municipal gallery, which must surely be seen as a victory for the Frankfurt Schools' deluded proletariat. The Joker wishes to externalize his subjectivity by destroying beauty - he wishes to be, as he confesses to Vicki Vale, the 'world's first fully functioning homicidal artist'. This is why he appears on TV himself to tell the city he has poisoned their chemical products, hijacking the city's network to impose his image on their screens at home, to impose his image on the viewer as receiver.

The Batman never appears on TV. In keeping with the psychic paradigm which establishes the Batman as a transcendental subject, he is always seeing, never seen. The subjects on the screens he views are always objects because they are never allowed to look back, never allowed to acknowledge that they are being watched, acknowledge the gaze, become subjects. Batman is never a voyeur, always a viewer. The gaze, as Lacan suggests, exceeds the look. The function of the gaze is to inscribe the viewer in the desiring-machine that is also the dialectic of lack and desire, of subject and object. But Batman is never determined by the gaze. Apparently, he controls it. In the primal, pre-linguistic space of the Batcave, he surveys his bank of TV screens. A few are tuned into the city's channels, others present video images shot inside Wayne Manor. It is here that Bruce Wayne first encounters his lover to-be, Vicki Vale.

In the most significant sequence of the film psychoanalytically, Bruce Wayne meets Vicki Vale, but Batman does not. They meet in a huge hall filled with arms and armour, at the end of which is a vast ornate mirror. Bruce Wayne is called away to become Batman and Vicki looks at herself in the mirror, the first act of anyone's split into subject and object, or, as Deleuze and Guattari would put it, the first entry into the tyranny of Oedipus. Behind the mirror, however, is a video camera, projecting her multiple image onto Batman's TV screens. The camera lens represents the Batman metonymically - he does not look at Vicki, but his camera ensures her status as *objet a*. The assumption is still Batman's control, his ability to efface the effect of the gaze on his own subjectivity. Kaja Silverman identifies this as the 'male look':

> ... in Hollywood film the male subject generally strives to disburden himself of lack, and the look is the most typical conduit of this disburdening (Silverman 1989, pp. 59).

This look is also representative of the male subject's role in the symbolic order:

> ...classic cinema equates the exemplary male subject with the gaze, and locates the male eye on the side of authority and the Law even when it is also a carrier of desire. (Silverman 1989, pp. 62)

Batman is an 'exemplary male subject' precisely to the extent he can efface his status as object, can become a *transcendental* subject.

As viewers of Batman the movie, we could not possibly *see* the dizzying *mise-en-abyme* of watching a screen watching a camera watching a TV screen watching a video watching a mirror reflecting an object of desire. To glean our filmic pleasure we identify with the camera first and Batman second. We share Batman's transcendental subjectivity even as we assert our own by indulging this plausible fiction. But this identification is contingent on the right choices - the necessary effacements, the necessary objectifications, the necessary production of desire. It is in this way that Batman might be seen to embody the suggestion that desire, both capitalized and subjectified, is an ideological operation. ■

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EVENT INTO STORY
Teaching News in South Africa

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This paper consists of an introductory document outlining an approach to news analysis, followed by a workshop section.

Introduction

News as TV Genre

News appears to occupy a special place within television, and is usually treated to a different form of analysis from that applied to other TV *genres.* It is regarded as 'serious', and assessed for its truth or impartiality (the accuracy of its presentation of the real world 'out there'), while sitcoms, soap operas or police shows are discussed as entertainment, with attention being paid to their production values and varied storytelling forms. Let us ignore for a moment this traditional compartmentalisation, and ask about news a few standard questions that apply across TV genres.

Who are the principal characters of news and how are they portrayed? What kind of storylines predominate? Can we identify a set of dramatic tensions/resolutions which are repeated night after night, acting styles that qualify as effective/ineffective, and narrative rules, agendas and interests that appear to regulate the organisation and presentation of the stories? It becomes clear that news *as story or narrative* possesses many of the basic qualities of other stories and other TV *genres.*

We could almost see it as an ongoing nightly soap opera in several acts, with a regular cast (allowing for the occasional replacement). And all glued together in good classic style with a well-known logo and theme tune, a familiar plot structure, easily accessible images and a dependable omniscient narrator who will place the viewer in the most advantageous position to understand the narrative.

If news is one storytelling system among others, then in order to analyse a news-story, we first need to grasp the basic rules of news as narrative: news as a structure in a rule-governed set of relations (i.e. a narrative system). Second, and of equal importance, we will consider the way in which these narrative rules 'go live' as they interact with national and local agendas. And finally, we will apply some of these ideas to various media narratives of a single recent event, Cape Town's 'Big March' of September 1989.

Formal Structures of News (International)

Not all events qualify as news. Nor can an event as such be communicated. It must be narrated (represented in a selection of words and images) - i.e. *it must become a story in order to be communicated.* The practice of news involves a discourse - a system of meaning-making rules for the selection and presentation of material, which is just as conventionalised as the rules governing the writing of a tragedy or a TV police series, and appears to have gained international validity. The rules of news narrative have been described by a number of media critics (Hall 1980, pp. 128-138; Hartley 1982, pp. 38-111; Fiske 1987, pp. 281-308). They can be briefly summarised under the two headings of *selection* and *presentation*.

Selection

News discourse is constructed according to *pregiven categories*: political, foreign, domestic, economic, occasional, sport and weather, and 'raw events' qualify as news insofar as they may be narrated as one of these types of story. Within these categories distinction is made between 'hard' (conflict) and 'soft' (human interest) items. The point to be made here is that regardless of what has happened in the world over the previous 24-hours (millions of events affecting a vast range of people), only those which satisfy these categories will cross the threshold and appear as 'news'.

Selection is helped by an informal paradigm of '*newsvalues*'. Events qualify more readily as newsworthy if they involve elite persons, are recent, negative and surprising. These criteria narrow down the range of acceptable events rather dramatically. News favours the socially powerful, who are presented repetitively and thus easily become familiar individual figures; it presents events as having a point of origin and closure within the span of a day (there is little sense of continuous history or context in news); its hunger for negativity (disruptions of the 'normal') makes a strong unspoken statement about ordinary life, which is assumed to be smooth-running, law-abiding and harmonious.

Presentation/Narration

We have noted that a raw event cannot in itself be communicated. Once it has qualified as newsworthy, it must be *narrated*, that is, transformed into a story. In other words, it must become *language* (whether in words or visual images). Hartley (1982, pp. 108-9) identifies four 'moments' in this process of narrating events as news:

a) *Framing*. The topic is established in an apparently neutral way: 'Today x happened at y'.
b) *Focusing*. We are filled in on what the event is 'about'.
c) *Realising*. The topic is made 'real' by, for example, actuality film or dialogue from witnesses or experts (accessed voices).
d) *Closing*. The 'wrap-up' by the narrator, which fixes or anchors the 'meaning' of the event.

This procedure employs the rules of classic storytelling as set out by Propp, Todorov et. al. A set of socially approved norms/an equilibrium is disrupted, followed by a contest between the forces of 'normality' and the forces of 'disruption/deviation'. Order is finally restored by means of a series of strategies of containment. In the case of news, whether in the press or on TV, the 'neutral' narrator, while depicting various deviations from the norm, ranks and contains the possible meanings that might be attributed to those events. Like the omniscient narrator of a classical story s/he offers a carefully chosen range of possible definitions (embedded voices, dialogue, positions), all controlled and ranked in status by the his/her overarching 'neutral' narrative voice.

The four narrative moments are easy to identify. In a newspaper piece the opening paragraph will set out the bare 'facts' (a);

succeeding paragraphs will elaborate, supplying further details (b); selected opinions will be sought (c); and a final section will wrap up the story, again using the voice of the opening (d). On TV news the pattern is the same. The newsreader (anchorperson/framing narrator) begins the story, speaking to camera in an all-knowing manner (with the help of the teleprompt) (a). S/he passes the viewer on to the correspondent (reporter or commentator) who places the event in context and supplies interpretation (b). This is usually followed by a film report of the actuality 'out there' (c). And then the final wrap-up (d). Each item is narrated in more or less the same way, and critics have noted that the bulletin as a whole, the 'macro-story' takes on the shape of each of its component parts, with the more disruptive items of the opening minutes moving via 'softer' stories to the relative normality of the sport and weather. The final mollifying 'goodnight' smile returns us to the ordinary world, with the assurance that all the disruption, conflict and deviance 'out there' is being taken care of, made sense of on our behalf by those who matter. We need not concern ourselves further, and may now relax and enjoy prime time.

So: news is simply another TV *genre*, a linked set of repetitive, entertaining stories involving intrigue, violence, romance and revenge, in which a small cast of well-known characters go through the motions night after night. Approved norms are subverted to be later restored. Heroes and villains take up their appointed places, with action and dialogue predictably scripted. Let battle commence: Dynasty or Who's the Baas? or SA Law. Looked at this way, it would seem that news as a narrative system is 'written in advance' of any particular broadcast. All that remains for the journalist is to slot in a few local details.

Yes, but.

While this 'structural' approach to news makes some telling points about the universal nature of storytelling rules (i.e. all stories/narratives of a certain kind seem to employ similar codes), there is clearly something more at stake here. It scarcely explains why news is such a jealously guarded and hotly contested area of TV. News clearly sets out to do more than just entertain. *It makes a claim on the 'real' that is of a different order from that of other TV forms.* The aim of this paper/workshop is to propose an approach to teaching news which will take account of both factors (arguably of equal importance):

a) news as entertainment (a storytelling genre among others) and

b) the underpinning drama or 'deep enigma' of TV news that accounts for its serious status.

I will put it this way:

News offers a prime example of discursive conflict: every news item, every broadcast, is a small drama forming part of a larger cultural contest over the way reality may be signified.

Discursive Conflict (Contextual)

We have established that news is a TV genre amongst others, and that it involves a pre-given system of narration. However its defining feature seems to be that it sets out to narrate not fictional, but 'real' events, drawn from the world 'out there'. It transforms events into stories, using the mediation of words and complex images. In TV this also involves camerawork, in which shot size, angle, camera movements and editing all interpret the events they set out to represent. What seems urgent at this point is to try to establish a way of talking about these procedures that will take into account not only the pressures coming from the direction of news *practice itself*, but also those from the *contingent world* in which the depicted events take place and in which real readers and viewers both participate in events and receive media messages.

Contemporary theory asserts that events do not in themselves, mean. It sees culture as a site of struggle, where genders, races, age groups and classes are engaged in an ongoing contest about the ways in which meaning will be produced for the human world in language. This is often called 'discursive struggle' or the struggle to control the rules of signification. Both events and language are regarded as 'multivocal': liable to different interpretations by different social groups, who continuously attempt to fix, in their own interests, the way signs (words, images) will be allowed to make the world mean. By implication, this involves a contest over the way in which human culture and society will be organised. This *struggle in discourse* thus forms a crucial part of the struggle for social power. These arguments about the production of social meaning have considerable explanatory force in the analysis of media texts, and particularly of news.

Hegemony

Following Gramsci and Althusser, Marxist theorists see culture as an area of exchange on the model of the economic marketplace. Cultural agencies such as the law, the family, education and the media have the crucial role of translating social antagonisms into terms which will 'make sense' of such tensions (e.g. of gender, race and class) so as to secure people's submission to the basic interests of the system. The interests of the powerful groups in society (often crudely totalised as 'the ruling class') are thus made to appear neutral and general ('natural') and command the consent of the nation as a whole. Ideally, this is done without coercion by reaching into and structuring the daily experience of people, containing their aspirations within acceptable bounds and aligning their interests so that groups and individuals 'live' their experience in a way that endorses the social authority of the powers that be. People develop a sort of 'common sense' - an internalised or naturalised set of frames for making sense of reality. (See Althusser 1977, pp. 153 ff.) This is sometimes called 'imagination'. It involves a quite complicated cultural shorthand.

It is important to note here that hegemonic work is by no means a strategy exclusive to capitalism, a sinister plot of one particular historical class. Linguistic and narrative theory demonstrate conclusively that strategies of 'naturalisation' are an intrinsic dynamic of human language per se, and also supply the basis of most classic narrative forms: one's 'mother tongue' seeks to disappear, to render itself invisible, as does any self-respecting classic narrator. And since human beings are tireless users of language and obsessional spinners of tales, what we have to do with here is the nature of human culture itself. On a daily basis we continuously take in data and process it, accommodating it to our known frames of reference.

In a more complex way, this is what is going on in the production of news. What is at issue in any story is not a simple question of truth or falsehood, objectivity or bias (perhaps objectivity is the greatest myth of all). It is rather a matter of: *WHOSE frames are supplying the meaning of these events? WHOSE interests are being naturalised in* *this particular case?* Whether the meanings/interests are those of the so-called ruling class or those of the workers, those of men or those of women, we have to do with hegemonic work. Hegemony, then, is an extrapolation to the social sphere of the basic meaning-making activity that enables each of us as individual members of a language group to function, and allows us, by processing the raw material of our experience through available frames, to cope with the world.

Crisis of Hegemony

In spite of the pervasiveness within culture of hegemony's naturalising work, at certain critical times in their history societies may experience what Gramsci terms 'a crisis of hegemony'. This occurs when social tensions mount to a point where the consensual terms of reference can no longer take the strain, and the possibility opens up for constructing new varieties of social meaning. This presents an exciting prospect for cultural workers. Arguably, this is something like the situation we find ourselves in in South Africa today. Stuart Hall sums it up:

> A crisis of hegemony marks a profound rupture in the political and economic life of a society, an accumulation of contradictions. If in moments of hegemony everything works spontaneously so as to sustain and enforce a particular form of class domination while rendering the basis of that social authority invisible through the mechanisms of the production of consent, the moments when the equilibrium of consent is disturbed ... *are moments when the whole basis of political leadership and cultural authority becomes exposed and contested.* (Hall et.al. 1982, pp. 217)

The causes of such crises are diverse. For Gramsci they occur

> either because the ruling class has failed in some major political undertaking for which it has requested, or forcibly extracted, the consent of the broad masses [South African examples abound], or because large groups [he cites especially peasants and petit bourgeois intellectuals] have passed suddenly from political passivity to certain activity, and put forward demands, which taken together, albeit not organically formulated, add up to a revolution. (Gramsci 1971, pp. 210)

More generally, economic crises are an acid test of hegemony. Whether or not such crises result in a direct challenge to authority depends on the extent to which dominant groups can continue to limit popular struggles and aspirations within acceptable bounds (such as, say, wage disputes or free school books) or whether, to the contrary, these move beyond such limits to challenge the distribution of economic and political power within the society as a whole. In a situation of crisis of hegemony while the dominant classes may still *rule*, they no longer *lead*.

It seems redundant to say that at present the South African state, in Gramscian terms, rules rather than leads. While its authoritarian structures are all still in place (ideological: churches, schools, media and repressive: courts, army, prisons) the country is experiencing a major crisis of confidence in the moral authority of the ruling bloc. What has been interesting in media terms, at least since the Defiance Campaign of 1989 and the subsequent lifting of certain restrictions in February of this year, is the way in which many cultural frames and meanings which had thus far (with whatever justification or lack of it) seemed firmly fixed, appear to be slipping their moorings. So strong and widespread is the desire to establish a new order (scenarios, of course vary widely), that events which just last December would have been unequivocally signified in the various media ('illegal march'; 'terrorist bombing'; 'black-on-black violence'; etc.) have come to be susceptible to re-definition. If there appears to be a positive gesture for change from whatever direction, the oddest of bedfellows rush in to stamp their meaning on the event and claim it as their own. At the other end of the spectrum, instances of violence are now mulled over, speculated about, and all but condoned by a press eager not to put a foot wrong in these equivocal times.

Storytelling in Context

What we are interested in, then, is the dynamic interaction that takes place between certain *general storytelling rules* that are appropriated by news practice, and specific *historical conditions.* For although the rules of both language and narrative appear to obtain a certain autonomy, they are, of course, socially created by men and women pursuing their interests in concrete historical situations. *They are basically contractual or arbitrary systems which depend on social consent*, and exist only insofar as they are used. In this sense 'discourse' is best understood as *the different kinds of use to which language is put.* It is within discourses that language systems and social conditions meet. Signs (words, images) and their referents (the phenomena they represent) 'go live' only within particular discourses. Discourses are generated by the interaction between the signifying systems of language and real historical conditions. Thus discourses partake of the systemic rules of language itself and of storytelling/narration, and in so doing they signify historical experience and simultaneously produce meaning for it. Discourses do not 'reflect' their linguistic, social or historical determinants: they *work on them in language*, transforming these raw materials into a recognisable product that we accept as familiar. Just as there is constant competition within each language group as to permissible deviations from the code, with a 'standard' being established (e.g. Standard English, the dialect of the most economically and politically powerful sectors of the community) against which 'errors' are judged and corrected, so in discourses we are persuaded to consent to the entrenched differences within the cultural/political system (masculine/feminine; legitimate/illegitimate; normal/deviant).

These ideas were followed by a scrutiny of a series of media texts which set out to depict a single event (Cape Town's 'Big March' of 13 September 1989,) and to see whether these concepts help us to understand some of the dynamics involved.

Workshop

(What follows is a brief summary of the workshop discussion.) We began by looking at the following narratives of the March:

Argus, 13/9/89;
Satelite feeds (ITN; ABC; BBC etc.), 13/9/89;
ITN (Channel 4) News, 13/9/89;
BBC1 News, 13/9/89; SATV News, 13/9/89.
Argus, 13/9/89; *Cape Times*, 14/9/89;
Argus, 14/9/89; *South*, 14/9/89.
Weekly Mail, 15/9/89; *Vrye Weekblad*, 15/9/89.

DISCUSSION

The 'Raw Event'

At the outset we decided that any event is, in itself, 'overdetermined': it is composed of a number of diverse individuals and groups, each with its own agenda and interests. On an occasion such as this one, conflicting interests are voluntarily submerged in a shared, general set of concerns. But the constituent elements are by no means lost; their traces are present in the variety of banners, slogans and behaviours which make up the visible 'event'. Another way of describing this is that the event is 'multi-vocal' - it speaks with many voices, and is best understood as a temporary and unstable synthesis of discourses. With some grasp of the local political situation, we could anticipate which of these discourses (or storytelling/meaning-making systems) might be selected and play a prominent role in the various media narratives of the event.

Formal Structures of News: Selection & Narration

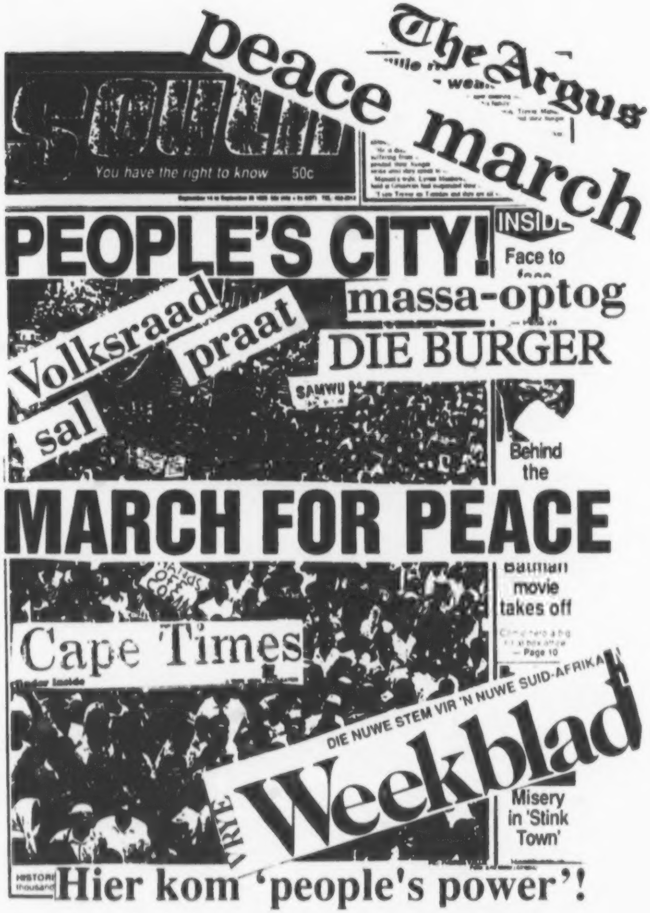
The event qualifies as 'news' by virtue of its being recent, negative and surprising, and the involvement of 'elite persons' in the form of the mayor, MP's, and prominent religious and community figures, especially Archbishop Tutu and the reverend Alan Boesak, international media 'knowns'.

We noted that all of the press stories, whatever their bias, are similarly structured in the way they frame, focus, realise and close the meaning of the event (the internationally accepted 'inverted pyramid' style). The photos in each paper comprise one high-angled long shot showing the size and progress of the march, and a medium close-up of the leading figures. Their captions direct the reader to notice certain features and ignore others. Headlines, choice of data, elements included in the newsphotos (plus their captions) and the choice of witnesses (accredited voices) all mutually support each other in the procedure of 'closure', or the strategy of producing a single, univocal 'meaning' for the event. We identified the basic interest in all the stories as the element of equilibrium/disequilibrium, or potential threat to public order. Having thus established the shared or general features of news-story, we moved on to the more interesting task of identifying the differences between them: the ways in which the specific interests and agendas (closures) of each newspaper intervene.

Hegemonic Work: (a) The Press

What and whose meaning is being 'anchored, fixed or naturalised' in each case? The task here is dual: technical and ideological. How do these specific agendas intersect with the technical procedures outlined above? Very briefly, our findings were as follows:

The narratives in the *Argus* and the *Cape Times* are very similar. Both construct the event as a 'civil rights' or 'peace' march. In the Argus ('Thousands in Peace March'), the key phrase is 'commonsense prevailed'. The main photo centres the banner stating' PEACE IN OUR CITY' and bouquets are handed out to all: to de Klerk for allowing the first march in years, to the police for staying out of sight, and to leaders, marshals and participants for a peaceful event. The DP members and mayor are invited to give privileged comments (a close-up of Colin Eglin on pp. 3) and anchor the meaning of the event. *The Cape Times* ('March for Peace') report is almost identical. Selected leaders are named, pictured and accessed, and again it is hailed as 'a victory for common sense' (read: the hegemony of the existing civic and parliamentary leadership?). It is important to note what is repressed, backgrounded or silenced in these reports (as in


The Argus
peace march
SOUTH
You have the right to know 50c
PEOPLE'S CITY!
INSIDE
Face to face
massa-optog
Volksraad sal praat
DIE BURGER
SAMWU
Behind the
MARCH FOR PEACE
Batman movie takes off
— Page 10
Cape Times
DIE NUWE STEM VIR 'N NUWE SUID-AFRIKA
VRYE Weekblad
Misery in 'Stink Town'
Hier kom 'people's power'!

Die Burger, below), namely, the numerous banners of extra-parliamentary organisations, and notably the ANC, plus the voices of their leaders (who organised and marshalled the entire event). *Die Burger* offers an interesting inflection in its headline: 'Volksraad sal Praat oor Massaoptog: Duidende bring Kaapstad tot stilstand'. Still equivocal about the new de Klerk 'openness' policies (only a day old!), its priority is to reassure its readers, mainly National Party supporters, that things aren't getting out of hand. Mention is made of a strong UDF and ANC presence: 'Die ANC vlag is vertoon, maar op versoek van die organiseerders verwyder'. This interestingly misrepresents what actually occurred at the city hall, where all of the speeches were given above the enormous black, green and gold banner draped across the front of the balcony.

Moving on to *South* and *Vrye Weekblad*, we are presented with an altogether different event. *South's* headline is 'PEOPLE'S CITY' in large capitals, and the whole front page consists of a single picture with a range of union, community and UDF banners, with the ANC one centred and prominent. The caption leaves little room for doubt as to the meaning of the event: 'Historic March: The African National Congress banner was unfurled in the centre of Cape Town on Wednesday...' We also noticed that the photo of the crowd, although from a high angle, clearly shows the facial features of individuals, who are rendered as pinpricks in the other papers. The story stresses popular leadership and formulates the event as a major act of defiance, radicalism and solidarity: here 'the people' are not simply citizens of Cape Town following the lead of civic dignitaries, but the dispossessed re-occupying 'their' city. *Vrye Weekblad* is quite close to this version with its New Afrikaner anarcho-liberalism: 'Hier kom `people's power'!': 'Die ANC vlag oor die balkon van die stadsaal het op dramatiese wyse die historiese betekenis van die dag tuisgebring'.

In each of the above cases, we noted the ways in which all the elements of signification combine to construct a single, univocal meaning for the event.

Hegemonic Work: (b) Television

We were interested in how similar the construction of an event into story is between press and TV news. On TV the supposed 'neutrality' of the anchorperson serves to authenticate the carefully selected series of images and opinions which comprise the report. The SATV news opens with fulsome praise for de Klerk's new 'openness' policy, and reads the March as the first vindication of this. The progress is followed in a series of long-shots, interspersed with close-ups of the leaders (Tutu, the mayor, the DP). At the city hall the camera studiously avoids the balcony and its ominous covering, carefully focussing only on the faces above (this requiring rather tortuous shots from side angles). Inside the hall we are permitted, for the first time in years, to see community leaders making speeches. But we do not hear their actual words, only a voice-over paraphrase. All 'alternative' banners are excised from the footage throughout. The mayor wraps up the event with an innocuous statement about brotherhood and love. This represents a triumph of narrative selection/exclusion as well as a major feat on the part of the camera operators and their editors. The report is very similar to that of *Die Burger* in its anxiety to simultaneously commend a shift in government policy and reassure the white public.

The presentation of the event on overseas TV channels in no way offers an exception to these rules. What we noticed there is the way in which (just as in the South African narratives) material must be brought into line with or 'framed' by discourses available to that particular range of viewers. In both the Channel 4 and ABC versions, the March was presented as a 'civil rights' event on the lines of the American black experience or similar peaceful public protests in Britain. In other words, whatever its local significance, either to its participants or the agendas of local South African political groupings, it can only be made 'meaningful' to overseas viewers if accomodated to their known frames of understanding, the political and and social discourses available to them. Both describe it as a 'civil rights march', ignore local labels (COSATU, UDF, DP) and concentrate on the presence of Tutu and Boesak, whose names alone have the power to make any event international news. The consonance of this 'liberal' discourse with that of the South African English press was noted.

The Big Question which was finally posed was: What, then is the final 'meaning' of the event? Can it be said to have a single meaning at all, or is its meaning only to be found in the variety of discourses that compose and/or narrate it? Clearly each of us, as a citizen, and hopefully, politically engaged and concerned individual, is prepared to defend the greater 'truth value' of one of these versions over the others. I have my own preference, based on carefully considered priorities. One of the aims of this exercise was to encourage a greater awareness of the complex and conflictual strategies by which social meaning is constructed. And also to provide some tools for responsibly intervening in this important activity: the struggle in discourse; the contest over the way our reality may be signified. ■

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UNDERSTANDING MASS MEDIA THROUGH GENDER
A Method for Developing Media Awareness

Alison Gillwald

Introduction

If you ask students, particularly women students, what they think about the portrayal of women in the media, you will find that very few are offended, outraged or irritated. Most students believe that the media simply reflect what women are in society, or what they want to be. If you were to provide evidence for example, of women posing provocatively with products that don't relate to them, say men's shoes, you are likely to be met with the shrug of shoulders or a defence of the image on grounds of fun - 'it's just an ad'. It is precisely this response that reveals the power of the mass media unobtrusively to assist in the social construction of gender by making their representations appear 'natural' or 'real' or 'real alternatives'.

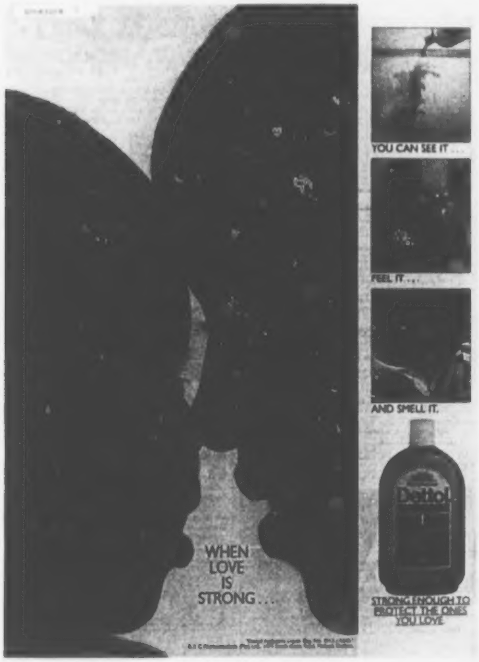

YOU CAN SEE IT…
FEEL IT…
AND SMELL IT.
Dettol
WHEN LOVE IS STRONG…
STRONG ENOUGH TO PROTECT THE ONES YOU LOVE

Figure 1 ▶

But this revelation will seldom be immediately obvious to students and if you point it out at this stage you *will* discover irritation and defensiveness because even where oppression is experienced or witnessed by women it is seldom conceptualised as such. Alvarado et al (1987) suggests that such antipathy towards studies of sexism is founded on the fact that women consciously or unconsciously believe they can subtly exert power through their limited and contradictory roles in society. For many femininity seems one valuable asset that society has not been able to wrest from them. By challenging their acceptance, indeed endorsement, of these images, you are countering years of socialisation during which the more they have conformed to these images as girls and women, the more they have been rewarded. That is why initially exploring with students the ways in which the media construct gender involves confrontation and negotiation of meanings - one is challenging perceptions which are rooted in the way things are.

Gender

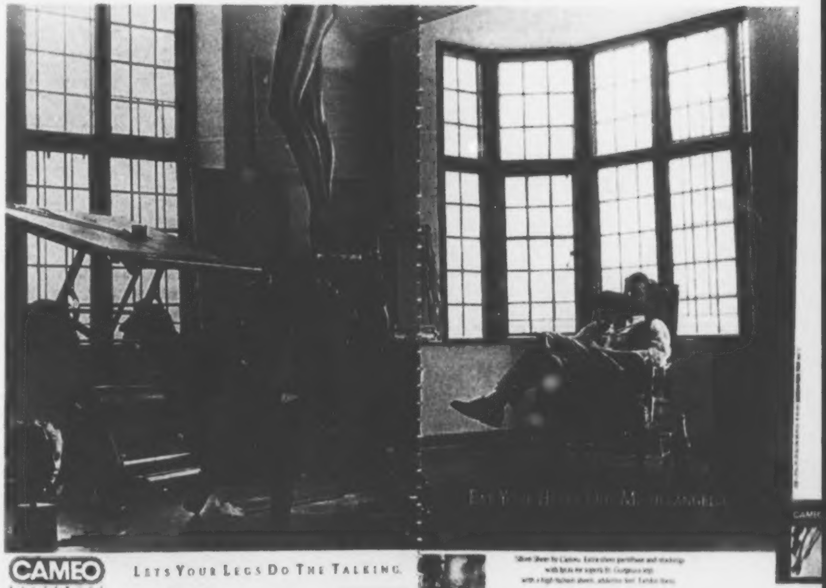
If one understands gender as the ways in which feminity and masculinity, relationships and sexuality are conceptualised and prescribed in society, it is not only equally interesting but probably necessary to pose the question of media images in relation to men. Although initially male students (and indeed female students) revel in the machismo of male media images, they often also begin to discover how burdened they are by trying to fulfill the impossible expectations of men created by the media. But for reasons of time and because I largely teach women students, I shall focus on media representations of women.

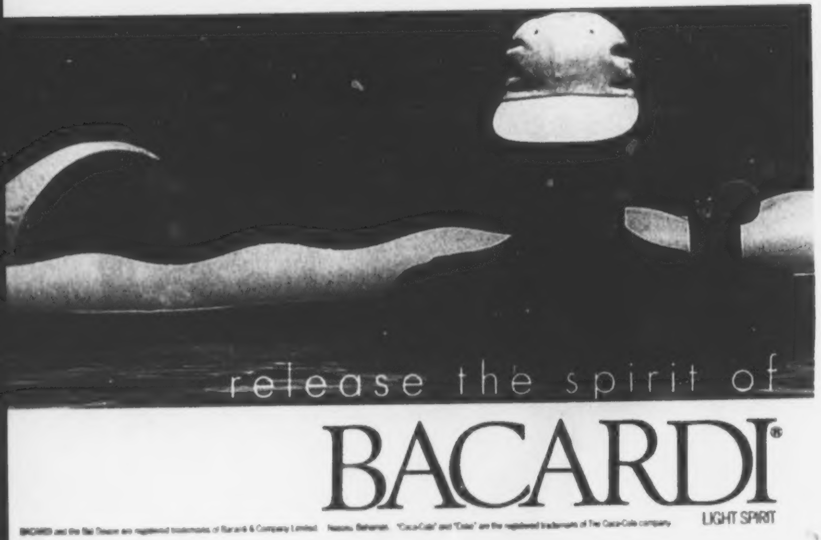
An unthreatening, unpersonalised way of starting off such a study is by getting students to create collages from magazines with the theme of women, or men or family or homosexuals or working women. This provides a tangible but unpersonalised basis for introducing a discussion of questions like what is meant by the term gender. How does it differ and how is it related to sex? These are very often understood to be the same thing by students because they see the one as explaining the other. If sex is taken to refer to biological differences and gender to differing social expectations of men and women then one can move on to discuss whether sexual differences 'naturalise' (Alvarado et al 1987, pp. 177) the social and economic inequalities which characterise gender relations the world over.

Because students are apparently so content with gender images in the mass media, exposing to students the dozens of studies done which document the exploitative ways in which women are represented by the media, not only fails to bring them closer to gender issues but also fails to engage them over media issues. One way of

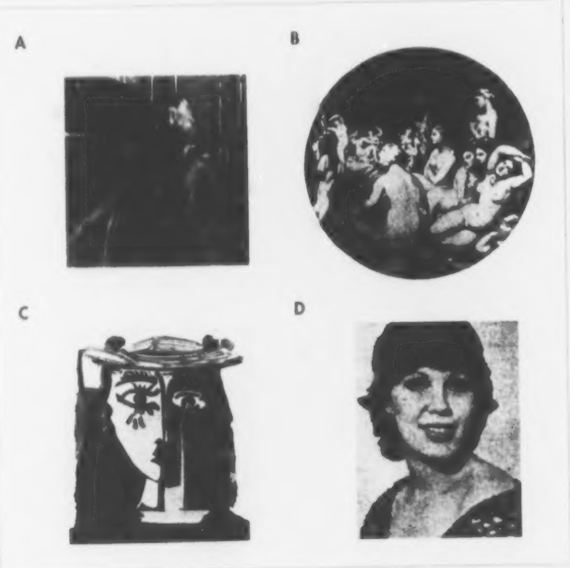
◀ Figure 2

▼ Figure 3


CAMEO
LETS YOUR LEGS DO THE TALKING.



▲ **Figure 4**



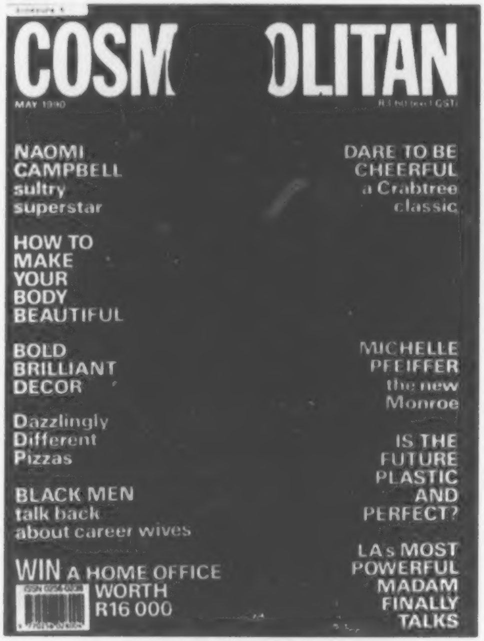
▶ **Figure 5. Compare and contrast A with B and C with D. How does meaning relate to form and genre?**

Photographs from Fiske, 1982.

allowing students to discover for themselves the narrow ways in which women are treated by the mass media, is through content analysis. (It needs to be reasonably rigorous if it is going to be worthwhile, and if it is going to be included should be a relatively in-depth course project.) Studies done by students recently have found that *Cosmopolitan* contains more sexually exploitative advertising than *Scope* magazine, (which involved grappling with defining what sexually exploitative advertising is, and trying to explain why this was so). Another study found that major women characters in soap opera only fall into four categories, and those that aren't filling traditional roles, are presented as not very nice ladies. Other studies examined the portrayal of women and girls in cartoons, another found that women only appear on the front pages of newspapers as victims or adjuncts to men and on the sports pages largely for their attractiveness as opposed to sports prowess.

Students are big mass media consumers, but they have seldom thought beyond the appearance of the product. Media institutions are vague and distant things which most students only experience at the reception end - where assessment of content is not encouraged and the form is made invisible. Projects, like the content analysis examples above, are useful because they operate in the realm of the familiar but present new ways of looking at it. Having to develop classification categories and methods of enumeration compels them to consider the network of processes of origination, selection and gatekeeping, treatment, economies of time and space that characterise the production of media products.

While having allowed students to identify sexism in the mass media for themselves may be a more worthwhile exercise than having distantly formulated data presented to them, to end here (as many course outlines do) would be counterproductive. Having gone through that process they may be left all the more with an overwhelming sense of helplessness in the face of an impenetrable value-reproducing machine. To perceive of oneself as a victim is paralysing. So, having stopped this awesome machine to examined the products, it is crucial to provide students with the understanding to contest what is represented as the obvious. At least when the machine starts again, as it must, they can realise the contents are not as inevitable or 'natural' as they might appear.


COSM
OLITAN
MAY 1990
NAOMI CAMPBELL sultry superstar
HOW TO MAKE YOUR BODY BEAUTIFUL
BOLD BRILLIANT DECOR
Dazzlingly Different Pizzas
BLACK MEN talk back about career wives
WIN A HOME OFFICE WORTH R16 000
DARE TO BE CHEERFUL a Crabtree classic
MICHELLE PFEIFFER the new Monroe
IS THE FUTURE PLASTIC AND PERFECT?
LA's MOST POWERFUL MADAM FINALLY TALKS

◄ **Figure 6**

Content

It is again at the level of reception and the familiar that one can provide a broad context for image analysis. This can demonstrate how meaning is produced and how it is not static or 'the truth'. The construction of content initially, but later also form, can be examined by unpacking images. One can present students with representations of women and girls from the mass media and ask them to compare this to their own experience, or their knowledge of their mothers, or their sisters, or their girlfriends. (This is of course in itself problematic as experience is very often filtered through media created perceptions of reality. See Funkhouser and Shaw on how synthetic experience shapes social reality). Can all mothers put their babies to sleep in seconds when friends call, as they do in soap operas? Do you suddenly become sexually irresistible after using Clearasil face wash or Impulse deodorant? Do you look attractive and feel so in control when you One-step your kitchen floor? Or more significantly does the image of white women cleaning floors at all, really resonate in South Africa? Why can one barely find images of women in the hard news pages of newspapers to discuss? Why do women require separate banking or insurance policies to men? Or does the use of household antiseptic allow you to bond with your child? (Figure 1)

If these few examples are not representative of women perhaps others are disputable. Students have often absorbed entirely the notion of an alternative reality, so while content does not reflect their experience it holds the promise of a better lovelife, marital relationship, motherhood. (Figure 2) (Another way to understand why the obvious appears to be so is by making it unfamiliar or unconventional: for example, we can put

Figure 7 ▶

NATAL
Style
THE SOUTH AFRICAN MIND
BIZARRE PETS
SAVE YOUR ENDANGERED LIVER
JEWELLERY
YOU CAN WIN

men in the place of women in advertisements which often demonstrate their absurdity.)

If one then examines a specific image and asks students to describe it, one might find there is initially consensus on its meaning. But if you demand another reading of it, students may come up with a range of interpretations. This exposes that there are differential readings of images although student might initially find themselves resorting to the 'preferred reading' which reflects the dominant values and beliefs of society. The way contexts and audience expectations combine in different ways to provide different decodings can also be explored (Figure 3). Block out the Cameo brand name and see how it influences meaning. This also provides an obvious example of the way women are objectified (or perform a solely decorative function) by literally being treated as inanimate in a way that allows their physical dismantling. (See also Figure 4.)

Form

But perhaps the most revealing aspect of gender construction by the mass media because of its invisibility, is form. To be able to challenge media representations of women and to be able to construct alternative frameworks, students need to explore the relationship between the content of media images of women and their form. And this is useful in revealing how all images are constructed in terms of a number of codes - aesthetic, cultural and technical. Again one can demonstrate these codes by using them unconventionally. It should also indicate that while the medium determines the ranges of possibilities, the actual use to which they are put are culturally restrained.

This also opens up an examination of why certain images are considered more real that others. Photographic and especially electronic visual images are considered more 'real' than print images or the ways genres influence content. (Figure 5) By way of introducing the idea that images carry extra textual meanings, one can consider the various meanings of a single image of women in a newspaper, on television and in a film at the cinema.

One can play for students advertisements or documentaries where men's voices are used and ask students to comment on the extract. Seldom is the use of the 'establishment voice' queried, even when it is used to articulate the thoughts of the woman present in the extract. One can ask students to consider what the effect of a young African woman's voice would have on the same visual representation.

Besides such ideological considerations, what such a study of form should involve is a deconstruction of the image in terms of the technical codes used to construct it, so the process of production can be made evident or demystified. Textual analysis of production allows us to stop the mass mediated gender flow, which knit together various entertainment and information programmes and advertisements. Practical examinations of audience construction also exposes the production and planning aspect of the mass media which goes unquestioned.

One can examine the title sequences of the soap operas or the jingles of advertisements or the colour and typeface of programme names in order to understand audience construction. Students can consider the choice of continuity announcers and voice-overs. How do they function as role models or role reinforcers? Why do women's magazine covers use representations of women which seem to objectify them or present them in ways which are sexually alluring if they are trying to sell to women? (Figure 6 & 7) What is the thinking behind the construction of audience for the women's section of the daily newspapers? A useful exercise is to get students to redesign the day's television schedule, with different assumptions about women to those that inform conventional planning.

What one is working towards with students is a realisation that reality is always 're-presented'; it cannot simply be presented or revealed. The power of the media lies in this practise of revealing information or events to the audience, while making invisible the mechanism whereby it is made possible - realism.

> What we mean by realist aesthetics are those sets of coding and conventions which deny the materiality of their medium and the perceptions which disregard it. (Alvarado et al. 1987 pp. 97)

When students realise that reality is always mediated, they can see that the represenations of women are not as obvious as they had thought. While it would be incorrect to suggest to students that this knowledge would provide them with the ability to directly change mass media representations of women or that changing mass media images would liberate women in society, I think this process can be personally empowering largely because information is power. Without this sort of exposure, students not only don't have the information to challenge their oppression but generally don't even have the information to know they are oppressed. ■

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THE NATAL VIOLENCE
Developing a Model for Evaluating Newspaper Information

A workshop by Clive Emdon

Section 1

Media control and apartheid

Journalists in our apartheid society contend with a vast array of laws and regulations which inhibit the proper reporting of information in almost every sphere of life.

The most recent of these are the successive States of Emergency regulations (1985-90), which among other things have restricted the reporting of actions by security forces, and the right of photographers or television crews to record the violence, and which give the police arbitrary powers to decide what may or may not be known about public violence. We may be experiencing the final years of an authoritarian system which has pervaded the lives of two generations of South Africans. Clearly it has taken its toll both in terms of individual and collective rights and freedoms. Apartheid has had devastating effects on the media. In the past 42 years of Afrikaner nationalism, black and radical political opponents of the state were banned, banished, jailed or exiled most with controls and censorship of their political views. The liberal English-language press became a barometer of values and the main critic of the Government. A few black staffed newspapers developed a critical voice but by the mid-80s they and the flag-ships of the liberal press were so pinned down by legislation, they were either banned by the Government or closed by their own managements. (Banning of *The World*, *Weekend World* and *Voice* in 1977; closure of *Post*, *Weekend Post* in 1979; and *Rand Daily Mail* and *Sunday Express* in 1985.) The structure of a giant commercial press remained in the hands of four companies that published some 25 dailies, bi-weeklies and weekly newspapers in English, Afrikaans and African languages. Between them, they ran the national news agency, the South African Press Association (Sapa). (McGregor 1987)

There was no independent ownership of black newspapers until the Inkatha movement gained control of *Ilanga* (1987) and no independent broadcasting until Capital Radio (1979) and the advent of M-Net (1985).

Radio and television have not only been the main media for National Party propaganda during these four decades, but have also become the palliative, the entertainer, the diversion for intelligent people from the hideous truths of this society.

The 'alternative press' were newspapers produced by progressive groups and collectives for the community at large, black communities, community organisations, trade unions, the church and students. One of the main reasons for the development and proliferation of such newspapers in the 1980s was the perceived failure of the commercial press to adequately reflect either the events or issues of the day. This was the view of liberal and progressive organisations and journalists who took initiatives to establish newspapers and news agencies, in most cases, using funds from international agencies and foreign governments. (*Weekly Mail* has been the most successful of these. Financed initially by former *Rand Daily Mail* journalists, it is fast becoming seen as a new style of independent 'commercial' newspaper. More in the 'alternative' mould: with alternative styles of organisation, of writing, of news assessment, and of alternative politics, are or have been the newspapers: *The Voice, New Nation, Grassroots, South, Saamstaan, UmAfrika, New African, Indicator, Vrye Weekblad, Cosatu News*).

British and American researchers in their critique of the commercial press, identify how structures of ownership and control as well as journalistic practices effect the way in which news is selected and used. Their criteria for evaluating the media can be applied to the South African press and broadcasting. When doing this what we can see is that the limited number of companies owning newspapers and the monopoly of broadcasting ownership and control in South Africa allows for fewer voices and views, a greater propensity for control and internal censorship as well as manipulation of information. It also suggests that control and ownership of media can be translated directly into tangible political and economic power, furthering the interests of big business and government.

When the questions of staffing and professional editorial decisions and practices come under scrutiny, two issues arise which are relevant to the way the press and broadcasting are dealing with the Natal violence: the commercial press is dominated by white males and relatively few black journalists are trained or hired, while the 'alternative media' are dominated by and staffed mainly by a younger group of black males. And it is almost exclusively these two groups that make the major decisions on what news should be used and in what way. There are historial structural reasons for the way the media operates, and that ownership and control and staffing of the Natal media are elements of these. Further, the writer contends that newspaper practices in the Natal press were imported from Fleet Street as standard British newspaper practice, and have seldom been modified or changed to suit local conditions.

The writer suggests that the Natal press has failed to live up to or to support the journalistic practices of the liberal British model. This is particularly evident in its claim to be objective and the neutral purveyor of information in reflecting a full range of political opinion and information; and in its pretence at 'covering the news', the main events of its time.

This behaviour can in part be explained by the effects that ownership and control have on the practice of journalism. Editors and senior executives of newspapers are carefully selected to best serve the value system inherent to the company and its interests. Such people are responsible for all newsroom and production practices.

It may also be explained by professional inertia, caused by subjection to State legislative controls for such long periods of time, by there being dominant companies without opposition in the area for so long, as well as following tried journalistic methods without innovation or challenges as regards these practices.

Broadcasting has had little or no opposition or competitors in its fields of practice (newsgathering and production). As suggested above it has been used by the State as a main conduit for apartheid policy. Not until February 1990 has the SABC contemplated a more wide-ranging style of broadcasting allowing for views counter to those of the ruling party.

How the media is viewed

More than any other public agency, the press and broadcasting have the task of defining social reality for us. When these agencies are inept or become contaminated this process becomes distorted. When such agencies and their processes of gathering and constructing information for consumption are submerged in an authoritarian society such as this, the distortions become endemic.

In Natal both the leaders of the ANC/UDF/COSATU grouping and Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha movement have been critical and at times condemnatory of both press and broadcasting in this region. For this purpose, a brief outline of their positions must suffice.

ANC/UDF/COSATU leaders see the press in Natal as representing business interests in this region. Historically, this press had on one hand, failed to adequately reflect the alliance's struggle within the apartheid system and at the same time, had supported the homeland leader Chief Buthelezi.

Except for the *Sunday Tribune*, *Post Natal*, and at times *Natal Witness*, the Natal press had failed to record and reflect the scale of struggle against apartheid in this region. This was true of the rise of independent trade unions in the 1970s, and the campaigns against the inclusion of Durban townships in KwaZulu particularly in the early 1980s, the formation of the UDF and campaign against the tri-cameral Parliament (1983-84), the formation of Cosatu (1985); as well as the general resistance to the KwaZulu authority and to the increasing militancy of the Inkatha movement. The alliance has found that some newspapers in the Natal press (*Daily News*, *Natal Mercury* and *Ilanga*, before its sale to Inkatha) have nurtured and supported Chief Buthelezi as a man of peace - a moderate, Christian, homeland leader - with whom business interests could deal. Over the years this press had supported each phase of Chief Buthelezi's rise within tribal, Zulu politics as well as his strategies to secure power through the KwaZulu Authority, the Natal Indaba and the Inkatha movement.

The ANC/UDF/COSATU alliance has seen the broadcasting media of the SABC as a mouthpiece of the ruling National Party Government. As such it was both a pervasive mechanism for maintaining the machinery and rationale of apartheid. The SABC is seen as having maligned organisations and their leaders of the majority population and of distorting information so as to sustain apartheid. For four decades it had failed to give anything but a pro-Government slant to news and views thus depriving the listening and viewing population of reliable information.

Chief Buthelezi and the Inkatha leadership's view of the Natal press has varied between contentment, displeasure and anger. Over the past two decades Chief Buthelezi had a good working relationship with a number of journalists employed on the Durban dailies, including the editors of these newspapers. The displeasure has been mainly with reports and features in the *Sunday Tribune*, written by particular journalists, as well as intermittent reports in the dailies reflecting badly on his role as peace-maker or on Inkatha as the cause of violence or conflict.

The cause of most displeasure has been *The New African* for its claimed disrespect of Chief Buthelezi as well as for its bias for the ANC alliance and against Inkatha.

Gavin Woods, the executive director of the Inkatha Institute, has said that despite a history of good relations particularly with the editors and senior writers on the Durban dailies, the entire press has become anti-Inkatha. Such bias was very difficult to counter with the supply of authentic information which often disproved the findings of so-called monitoring groups which he believed were 'all inside the ANC-UDF-COSATU camp' (Interview, March 1990). John Aitcheson is the deputy-director of the Centre for Adult Education of the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg, who is viewed by many journalists as the best source of current information on the conflict. He found *Natal Witness* had at times been the most consistent newspaper at covering 'the war', but that the press and broadcasting in general were neither uniform nor consistent in covering the violence.

To many journalists the violence is on-going and one of many assignments in this region and not necessarily the most important.

Academic commentators and researchers agreed on a number of essential areas of interest which they suggested needed attention by the media:

- Press and radio referred uncritically to the Natal conflict as 'black-on-black violence'. This was seen as a simplistic definition as it removed the political dimension from the conflict and reduced it to something similar to mere faction fighting, endemic to the Zulus and to Natal.
- Many writers identified Natal as a special case in South African politics, while all the ingredients of covert state action in the use of the police and military as well as 'vigilantes' was evident.
- Newspapers tended to ignore the context of the war in news reports. They did not remind readers of the low intensity violence between the parties that has gone on for years.
- Factors such as poverty, tribalism, gangsterism and other criminal activities that fuelled the conflict were often ignored.
- The press and SABC in Natal had a specially important role to give white readers and viewers specific information on the African areas so they could make rational and informed economic and political decisions affecting them.
- The media needed to show the complexities of the situation and give the background to reports to help readers and viewers understand these.
- Newspapers and broadcasting, except in a few instances, failed to do any meaningful investigative journalism on the ongoing conflict.
- Staffers in both newspapers and broadcasting were able to handle the politics of the Berea and white areas, but failed to apply the same standards when viewing black politics.

Problems with covering the violence: journalists' perceptions

In interviews with journalists covering the violence and those handling copy or news editing, it becomes evident that the hurdles of state censorship, laws affecting the press and regulations under the Emergency, are just part of what many perceived as obstacles to information getting into print. Journalists had wide-ranging views on the Natal media's coverage of the violence, some were critical, while others were supportive.

Internal mechanisms for checking reports and the run through by a legal eye, always viewed as an essential part of dealing with contentious copy, had become so part of the system of news production, that they too were obstructive. The more obvious problems caused by this method were the delays caused by over-caution and interference by relatively conservative executives which ensured that 'news' then became irrelevant. Less obvious were pervasive attitudes which became part of the newsroom culture. These were often political viewpoints generated by key editorial executives which effected everything that went into print. Common perceptions of Durban journalists in the commercial press included the notions that follow.

- The violence was seen as remote, and not essential reading for newspapers catering mainly for white readers (*Natal Mercury*). Reporters suggested that the news executives were 'switched off' to the on-going violence and made the point that nothing new really happened, but that it was 'just a question of degree'.
- There were real reasons why newspaper could not go on covering the violence: it was not newsy, and after a while, everything sounded similar if not the same. This was judging events by the conventional news criterion of necessitating the dramatic, the unusual, the different, the important in terms of scale (the most violent, the biggest). One newseditor of a Durban-based newspaper declared to his staff that he did not want any more 'blacks in the rain stories'. This signified an attitude that the repetition of 'hard-luck' reports as well as stories of oppression or repression could not or should not dominate the Sunday fare.)
- On newspapers there was a lack of discussion and debate in newsrooms. There was a level of discussion among editorial executives at successive news conferences and among leader writers. But in the main, staff became intellectually sterile by depending on the 'tried and tested' system of generating and 'handling' news, year in and year out. The problem was that the 'system' was assumed, and the staff were bound by its practices.
- In newsrooms there was an unstated central tenet that newspapers provided a social service as society's watchdog which included being the ears and the eyes of the silent majority. The contradictions of this position were only too evident, for it was essentially middle-class white males who made the decisions about what news was given priority and what was ruled out.
- On many South African daily newspapers news items generated by reporters might compete with as many as 500 other local, national and international stories. The violence in Natal tended to be eclipsed by newer stories and themes. The newspaper was not seen as the main social agency for providing society with the minutiae of the ongoing conflict.
- If it was taken seriously, then too few staff were put onto the job of covering the violence. The editorial system required that on a daily newspaper reporters produced stories all the time. News editors were reluctant to give additional unproductive time. They could not afford full-time people although it really was a 'beat'. More people were needed on the job, including black journalists - clearly not being able to speak Zulu was a handicap, although being white might protect the reporter's safety in some violent situations.

- Journalists were nearly always at risk trying to maintain their professional integrity, their safety and their jobs: trying not to put their sources at risk; being under constant threat of being sued by Chief Buthelezi; being charged under the Emergency legislation or the Police Act; or being personally threatened with violence or of being injured by the 'comrades' in UDF youth leagues or by Inkatha fighting men; or being caught in the cross-fire.
- News editors and sub-editors changed the copy (what was written) by laundering the language so as not to offend or feed the conflict.
- Reporters did not get enough support from their colleagues especially the executives (newseditors, editors, chief subs). They saw themselves as being 'out on a limb' all the time in the public eye, and their own credibility was often questioned.
- The Natal violence was a crisis of national proportions which the media itself needed to realise as did the public. There was a need to identify it as a 'civil war' and to recognise the effects as similar to those in Beirut or Belfast.

Journalists in the 'alternative press' identified the same sorts of problems with maintaining their integrity with sources, and saw the following as the main reporting issues.

Safety: It was easy to get access to the 'comrades', being identified as alternative newspaper journalists, but they found they could not then go to Inkatha sources without being threatened.

The Police: Police officers in Natal in many instances ordered journalists, particularly black journalists, off the scene of violent episodes despite a relaxation in some emergency regulations about reporters being allowed into 'unrest' areas (since Feb 2, 1990).

Access: This was particularly difficult in rural areas because of the lack of financial resources of newspapers, in particular their lack of transport. It was also not in the interests of journalists to be seen in the presence of police on the scene of violence.

Critique of the Natal press

In stating baldly the 'problem areas' of reporting the violence, clearly it is difficult to make value judgements and generalisations about the merits or demerits of practices in such complex institutions as the press and broadcasting media. Complex because each has its own traditions and value systems and that the behaviour of individual journalists or their newspapers often contradict the 'main' observations at times. However, some clear and unambiguous questions arise which need to be answered in a focus on the way the media have covered the violence in this region. There have been several obvious failures, such as those elaborated below.

- Failure to identify the socio-economic backdrop to the Natal violence as a struggle over resources, and to identify the rural and urban authorities in this region as being under the control of the KwaZulu Authority, and hence Inkatha;
- Failure to indentify where the large number of arms and access to ammunition was coming from;
- Failure to reflect adequately on the effects of the conflict on a school-going generation in terms of the disruption of schools and teaching, the psychological effects of on-going violence, or to report adequately on Inkatha vigilante attacks on children at schools resulting in deaths and injuries;
- Failure to report the massive decline in

productivity in this region due to absenteeism, low morale because of the on-going conflict, and rising unemployment;

- Failure on the part of the media to show the collapse of the criminal justice system in coping with the political violence, and the widespread loss of faith in the legal system with the obvious danger of this, or to show how the South African Police, and to a lesser extent the South African Defence Force, contributed to and were participants in the violence and seen by the victims of the violence to be a contributory cause and not an impartial force to prevent the violence;
- A failure to reflect the views of credible observers that the security establishment had engaged in the conflict by being seen to collaborate with one side against the other; as openly disregarding law-breaking activities by certain participants of the violence; and as having been tardy in the extreme in not bringing criminal activities to the courts;
- A failure to adequately reflect the forced recruitment drives by Inkatha, and attempts to drive the UDF out of the Pietermaritzburg suburbs; the attitudes of rebellious youths who refused to abide by traditional norms; the wide-scale resistance to local government structures;
- A failure by political commentators to show that the interests of Inkatha were synonymous with those of Chief Buthelezi; the growing perception that Inkatha as an instrument of violence might damage Chief Buthelezi's public image with the white community, internationally and in the business community;
- The failure to suggest if not show that the KwaZulu Assembly and Cabinet could use its system of organisation to control or curtail the violence.

Section 2: The Press at Work

News

At the heart of the practice of journalism is the concept of 'news'. Journalists the world over are inclined to see themselves as the sole arbiters of what signifies news, how it is derived, written and used in newspapers, radio or television.

The 'audiences' and 'readers' of the mass media are the remote, but necessary market, that recognises 'news'. Their viewing, listening or readership habits are scrupulously observed by market surveys which become the measure of success or failure of a newspaper or broadcasting station. This is because the commercial mainstay of media is advertising and the more successful the medium in terms of audience, the greater its potential for advertising.

Journalists see the main task of producing 'hard news' in the way it is cast or written in terms of its immediacy (in time and locality) and its relevance (social or political interest). Gultang and Ruge (1965) identified key factors that influenced the selection of news. They identified that events of short duration (similar frequency) suit most news media for recording; the bigger the event or situation, the bigger the story; and the less ambiguity, the more something will be noticed; and what is interpreted as 'meaningful', is culturally-bound, suggesting that some degree of ethnocentrism will be operating.

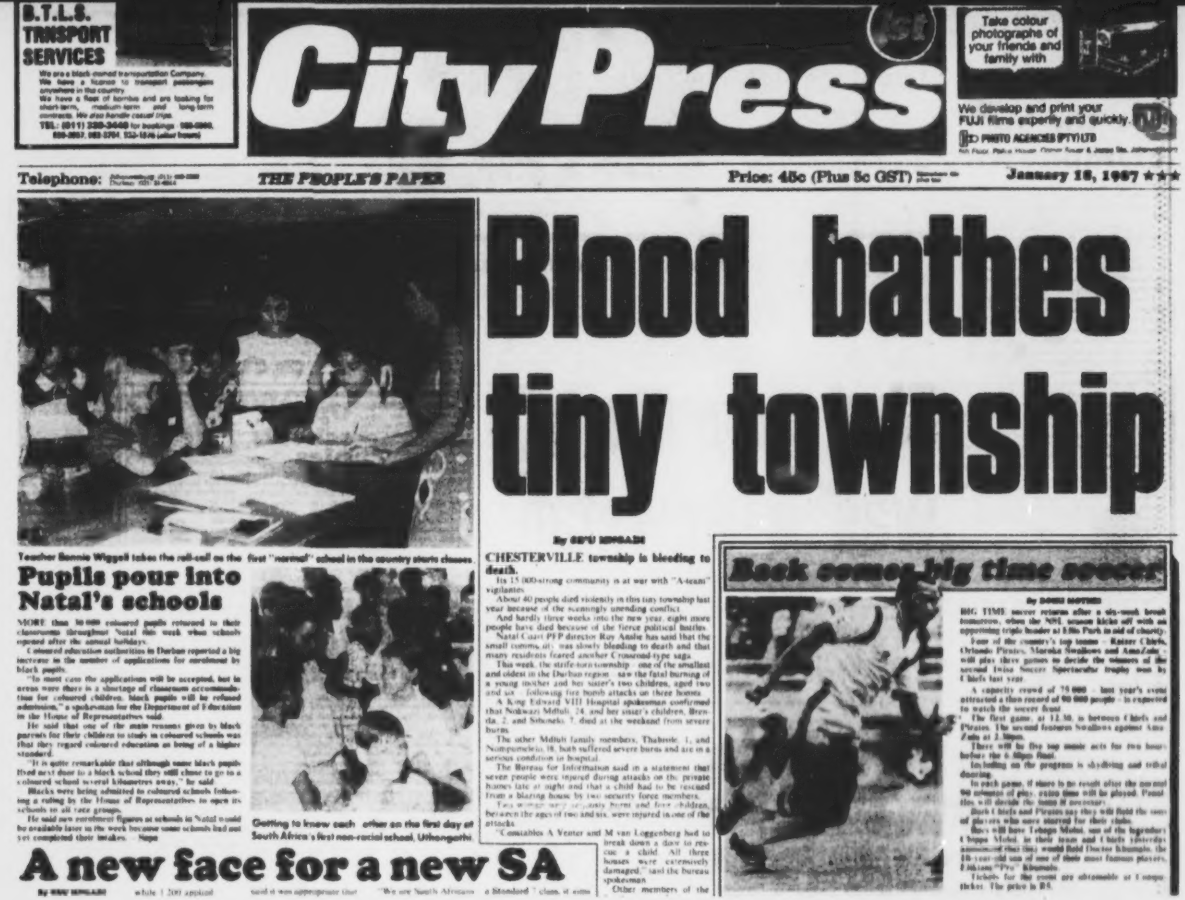
The British sociologist, Steve Chibnall, developed a critique of news suggesting a range of deficiencies in the way the media attempt to wrestle with the task of making information accessible to the public. (Referred to in Section 3 Activity.)

His analysis established a useful set of measures which when applied to the Natal violence suggest:

- News is event-orientated: news is only generated if it is eventful, that is if it is new, interesting, and/or unique. In terms of Natal reporting of the violence any or all of these criteria should apply. The effect of this is that the violence is reported in terms of fragmentary episodes or events and as a result is not perceived as a war. The device for offsetting this, and used to effect, more by weekly newspapers than dailies, is the news backgrounder or feature article which provides the context of the news.
- News puts emphasis on the dramatic. This has the effect of trivialising issues and focussing attention on the effects rather than the causes of social problems. In Natal the reporting of violence is mostly restricted to the recording of events in terms of death and destruction. The writer suggests that the 'newsroom culture' prevails in which either consciously or unconsciously the more dramatic or sensational information is produced. This is clearly evident in the use of police reports and the way in which the conflict is 'criminalised' - interpreted according to 'law and order' norms, and not in a social, economic or political context, or even a historial one.
- News tends to focus on individuals whom it personalises and cultivates: journalists in Natal have tended not to identify leaders of the warring factions (such as the 'warlords') in the violence but describe the politics of Natal in obvious personalised terms, that of Chief Buthelezi on one side and Mr Gumede and Mr Gwala on the other. More recently the media, rather simplistically, suggested the peace process can or should be cast by Buthelezi and Mandela
- News eliminates the shades of grey in situations and tends to simplify all situations. This tends to make human action intelligible at the level of the mundane, or a world of cliches, and taken-for-granted assumptions. Part of the emphasis on newscasting or news production is on the economy of style and of language. This is clearly also part of the what good communication is all about. But in the process of cutting or clipping, either to fill a 15cm space on the front page or to produce a 40-second time slot on radio, always under pressure, the complexity of the real world is lost. So news about the violence is about events, which are direct, simple and sufficient items of information, often without explanations or history.
- News writers use a frame of reference which generally uses a range of experts, officials, or public figures from the status quo, who become the routine definers of reality. In Natal these would include social scientists and academics, such as economists, criminologists, the 'monitors' of the level and range of violence, medical personnel, police and army officials, Government figures and politicians. Chibnall's point is taken, though some of these sources would not necessarily be seen as part of the status quo.

Objectivity

The Media Workers Association of South Africa (MWASA), a black consciousness organisation of journalists and press workers, found, in what it referred to as the 'objectivity debate' in South African journalism that two sets of values were applied by professionals in the English press: one for themselves as whites, who saw themselves as custodians of the truth and Western liberal values, and another for black journalists, whom they feared might contaminate their sensibilities



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January 18, 1987 ★★★

Blood bathes tiny township

By [illegible]

CHESTERVILLE township is bleeding to death.

Its 15 000-strong community is at war with "A-team" vigilantes.

About 40 people died violently in this tiny township last year because of the seemingly unending conflict.

And hardly three weeks into the new year, eight more people have died because of the fierce political battles.

Natal Coast PFP director Roy Ainslie has said that the small community was slowly bleeding to death and that many residents feared another Crossroads-type saga.

This week, the strife-torn township — one of the smallest and oldest in the Durban region — saw the fatal burning of a young mother and her sister's two children, aged two and six — following fire bomb attacks on three homes.

A King Edward VIII Hospital spokesman confirmed that Nokwazi Mdluli, 24, and her sister's children, Brenda, 2, and Sibonelo, 7, died at the weekend from severe burns.

The other Mdluli family members, Thabisile, 1, and Nompumelelo, 18, both suffered severe burns and are in a serious condition in hospital.

The Bureau for Information said in a statement that seven people were injured during attacks on the private homes late at night and that a child had to be rescued from a blazing house by two security force members.

Two women were seriously burnt and four children, between the ages of two and six, were injured in one of the attacks.

"Constables A Venter and M van Loggenberg had to break down a door to rescue a child. All three houses were extensively damaged," said the bureau spokesman.

Other members of the

Teacher Bonnie Wiggell takes the roll-call as the first "normal" school in the country starts classes.

Pupils pour into Natal's schools

MORE than 10 000 coloured pupils returned to their classrooms throughout Natal this week when schools opened after the annual holidays.

Coloured education authorities in Durban reported a big increase in the number of applications for enrolment by black pupils.

"In most case the applications will be accepted, but in areas were there is a shortage of classroom accommodation for coloured children, black pupils will be refused admission," a spokesman for the Department of Education in the House of Representatives said.

He said that one of the main reasons given by black parents for their children to study in coloured schools was that they regard coloured education as being of a higher standard.

"It is quite remarkable that although some black pupils lived next door to a black school they still chose to go to a coloured school several kilometres away," he said.

Blacks were being admitted to coloured schools following a ruling by the House of Representatives to open its schools to all race groups.

He said new enrolment figures at schools in Natal would be available later in the week because some schools had not yet completed their intakes. — Sapa

Getting to know each other on the first day at South Africa's first non-racial school, Uthongathi.

Back comes big time soccer

By [illegible]

BIG TIME soccer returns after a six-week break tomorrow, when the NSL season kicks off with an appetising triple header at Ellis Park in aid of charity.

Four of the country's top teams — Kaizer Chiefs, Orlando Pirates, Moroka Swallows and AmaZulu — will play three games to decide the winners of the second Twiza Soccer Spectacular trophy won by Chiefs last year.

A capacity crowd of 75 000 — last year's event attracted a then record of 90 000 people — is expected to watch the soccer feast.

The first game, at 12.30, is between Chiefs and Pirates. The second features Swallows against AmaZulu at 2.30pm.

There will be five top music acts for two hours before the 6.30pm final.

Including on the program is skydiving and tribal dancing.

In each game, if there is no result after the normal 90 minutes of play, extra time will be played. Penalties will decide the issue if necessary.

Both Chiefs and Pirates say they will field the core of players who were starred for their clubs.

Bucs will have Tebogo Moloi, son of the legendary Chippa Moloi, in their team and Chiefs yesterday announced that they would field Doctor Khumalo, the 18-year-old son of one of their most famous players, Eliakim "Pro" Khumalo.

Tickets for the event are obtainable at Computicket. The price is R5.

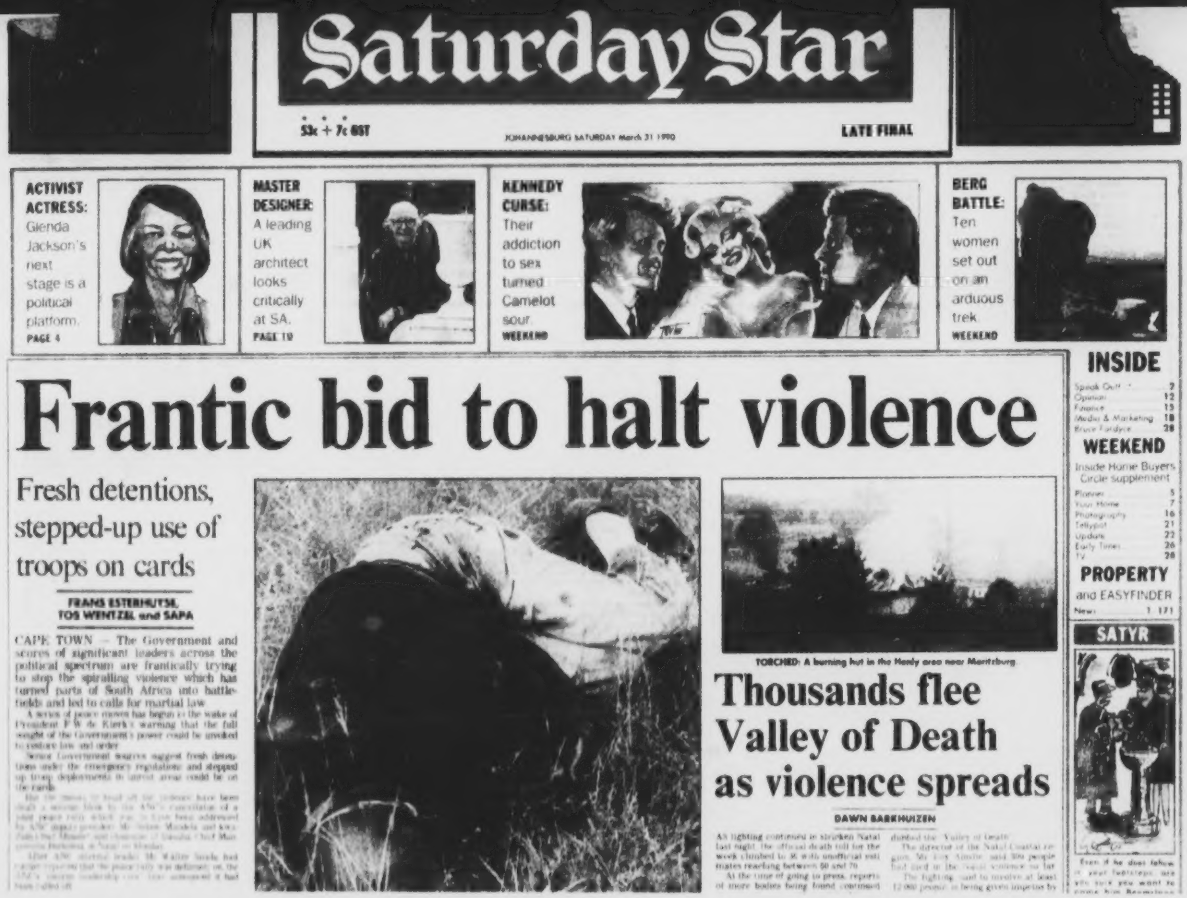
A new face for a new SA

By [illegible] while 1 200 applied said it was appropriate that "We are South Africans a Standard 7 class, it seems

and their newspaper's integrity by identifying too closely with the masses and with the oppression of apartheid, and be anti-capitalist to boot.

The Association of Democratic Journalists (ADJ) in its critique of the Natal press, has suggested that certain commercial newspapers in the Natal press were not as objective as they claimed to be, in using sources from 'both sides' of issues or events. The organisation saw this press as partisan, in that it has traditionally supported and nurtured a public image of Chief Buthelezi, and by its failure to indentify key players and roles in the conflict.

The writer suggests that biases are demonstrable in both the 'commercial' or established press and the 'alternative press'. As suggested above the commercial press claims to be objective but fails in the task. It simply does not have the tools nor infrastructure (the practices or staffing) to do it. Some of the 'alternative' newspapers, particularly *New Nation* and *The New African* see their role as one of redressing the damage or the vacuum created by the commercial press, and their partisanship is clear. Others like *Weekly Mail*



Saturday Star

53c + 7c GST · JOHANNESBURG SATURDAY March 31 1990 · LATE FINAL

ACTIVIST ACTRESS: Glenda Jackson's next stage is a political platform. PAGE 4

MASTER DESIGNER: A leading UK architect looks critically at SA. PAGE 19

KENNEDY CURSE: Their addiction to sex turned Camelot sour. WEEKEND

BERG BATTLE: Ten women set out on an arduous trek. WEEKEND

Frantic bid to halt violence

Fresh detentions, stepped-up use of troops on cards

FRANS ESTERHUYSE, TOS WENTZEL and SAPA

CAPE TOWN — The Government and scores of significant leaders across the political spectrum are frantically trying to stop the spiralling violence which has turned parts of South Africa into battlefields and led to calls for martial law.

A series of peace moves has begun in the wake of President F W de Klerk's warning that the full weight of the Government's power could be invoked to restore law and order.

Senior Government sources suggest fresh detentions under the emergency regulations and stepped up troop deployments to unrest areas could be on the cards.

TORCHED: A burning hut in the Henly area near Maritzburg

Thousands flee Valley of Death as violence spreads

DAWN BARKHUIZEN

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and EASYFINDER

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SATYR

Even if he does follow in your footsteps, are you sure you want to

and *UmAfrika* see their strength as media in their independence and non-partisanship.

Newsroom practices

The role that professional journalists in the commercial media claim for themselves is that of mediators and interpreters of the news, as well as arbiters of what the public should know.

As mediators they tend to put the 'real action' into the abstract, being reliant on 'experts' who both describe and interpret information. As arbiters of what is made known, news editors decide what to focus on. Reporters when writing reports select material for prioritising as news. Copy tasters then decide whether or not the report in question should be used and in what way (at what length and on what page). News editors, chief sub-editors and editors at any stage may change the focus or the positioning of reports.

By contrast, reporters or writers on 'alternative newspapers' are not subject to the same 'newsroom culture' that rigidly specifies what constitutes news, how it should be written and what norms govern where it should be placed. There are clearly positive and negative effects of this different sort of behaviour. The positives are that reporters have greater freedom of choice in defining the reality of what they observe - allowing for much more subjectivity, for first-hand experiences and perspectives. The counter charge to these practices are clearly those of licence. Should reporters have such freedom? What controls are there, particularly in volatile situations like the Natal violence? The counter by 'alternative' style journalists, is that reporters are 'given their heads' without the entrenched and massive bureaucracy of supervision.

Partly because of the relatively small scale of such newspapers, reporters, subs, newseditors, and editors are collectively made responsible for copy by working in closer contact with one another as well as perhaps having a more precise and clear idea of their newspaper's purpose or role, and thus identifying more with the final product.

Problems inherent to the mass media

All mass media (newspapers, radio and television) as we know them fail to be directly accountable for their actions: what they report, how they report and what commentaries they make. The sleight-of-hand answer to this by successive generations of editors and broadcasters has been the 'free market of ideas' approach: 'they (the audience) would stop buying our newspapers if they didn't like them'; or by broadcasters: 'they can simply turn it off'. The counter to this is that freedom of expression necessitates freedom to publish and freedom to broadcast. This clearly means free from government interference and from major commercial interests.

Ownership of the mass media is either dominated by governments or by cartels, or by wealthy families or individuals. In Natal as in many parts of the country one agency, the SABC, runs all the broadcasting; and one company, Natal Newspapers Ltd., dominates the publishing and printing of newspapers. As suggested above, it was because such interests restricted the independence and limited the perspectives of media that 'alternative newspapers' were seen to be essential here in Natal. Their partisanship to organisations associated with the liberation struggle is evident while there is a history of partisanship and support for Chief Buthelezi within the English commercial daily press in Durban. It involves a number of journalists who subsequently became full-time officials of KwaZulu or Inkatha organisations, thus reinforcing particularly the media and public relations arm of Chief Buthlezi and Inkatha.

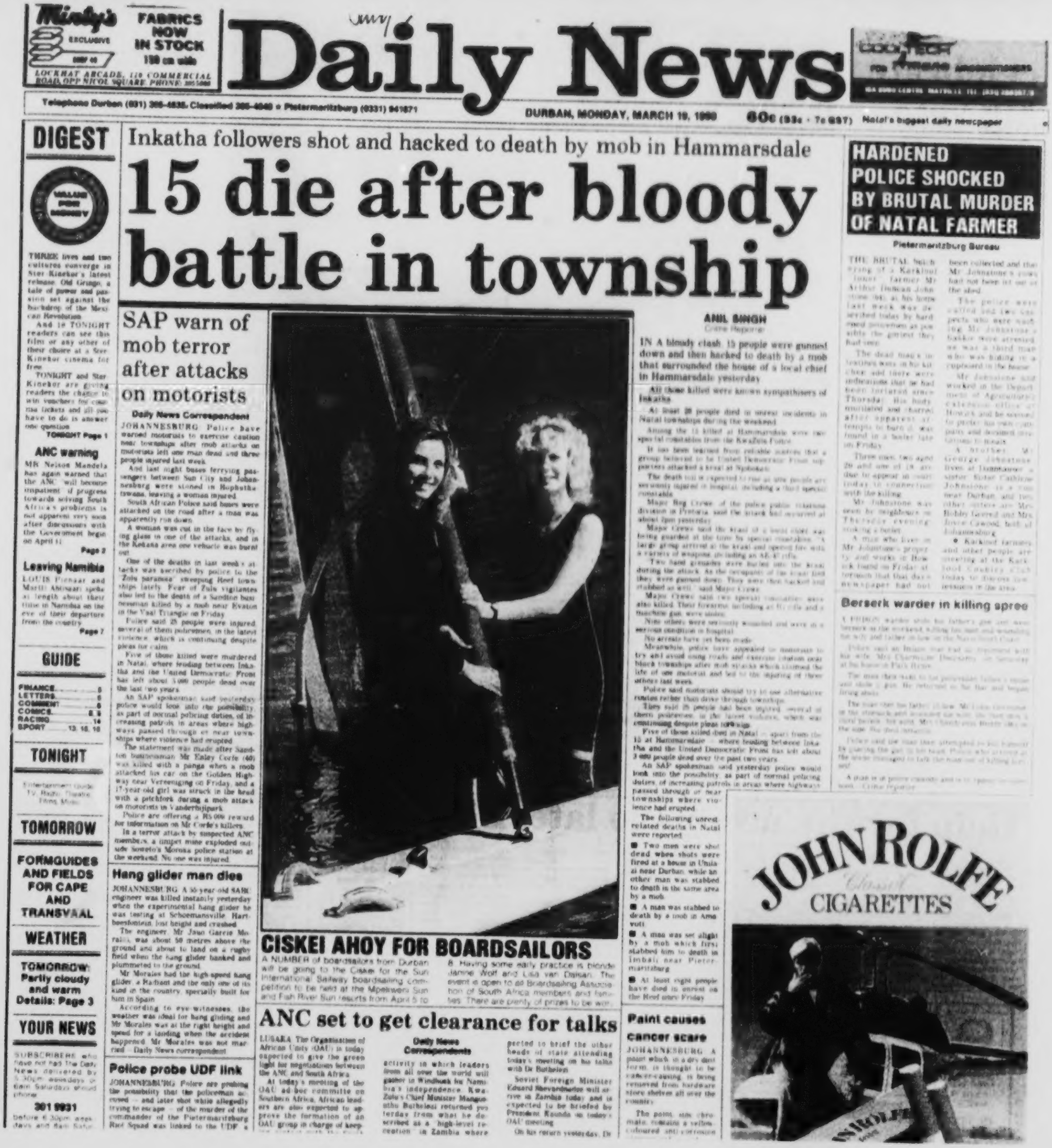
Section 3: Media Research and Information Gathering

Research

In the 1970s and 1980s the focus of much of the new research shifted from the 'effects' of the mass media on audiences to questions of control and content of the mass media.

British and American writers dramatically underlined new issues, such as:

- the way in which the mass media as institutions (newspapers, magazines, radio, television and film studios) might be owned and controlled by important interests in society - such as the State, the Church, trade unions, political parties, business interests;
- how the ownership and control of the mass



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DIGEST

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And in TONIGHT readers can see this film or any other of their choice at a Ster-Kinekor cinema for free.

TONIGHT and Ster-Kinekor are giving readers the chance to win vouchers for cinema tickets and all you have to do is answer one question.

TONIGHT Page 1

ANC warning

MR Nelson Mandela has again warned that the ANC "will become impatient" if progress towards solving South Africa's problems is not apparent very soon after discussions with the Government begin on April 11.

Page 2

Leaving Namibia

LOUIS Pienaar and Martti Ahtisaari spoke at length about their time in Namibia on the eve of their departure from the country.

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FORMGUIDES AND FIELDS FOR CAPE AND TRANSVAAL

WEATHER

TOMORROW:
Partly cloudy and warm
Details: Page 3

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Inkatha followers shot and hacked to death by mob in Hammarsdale

15 die after bloody battle in township

ANIL SINGH
Crime Reporter

IN A bloody clash, 15 people were gunned down and then hacked to death by a mob that surrounded the house of a local chief in Hammarsdale yesterday.

All those killed were known sympathisers of Inkatha.

At least 20 people died in unrest incidents in Natal townships during the weekend.

Among the 15 killed at Hammarsdale were two special constables from the KwaZulu Police.

It has been learned from reliable sources that a group believed to be United Democratic Front supporters attacked a kraal at [illegible].

The death toll is expected to rise as nine people are seriously injured in hospital, including a third special constable.

Major Reg Crewe, of the police public relations division in Pretoria, said the attack had occurred at about 2pm yesterday.

Major Crewe said the kraal of a local chief was being guarded at the time by special constables. "A large group arrived at the kraal and opened fire with a variety of weapons, including an AK-47 rifle.

"Two hand grenades were hurled into the kraal during the attack. As the occupants of the kraal fled they were gunned down. They were then hacked and stabbed as well," said Major Crewe.

Major Crewe said two special constables were also killed. Their firearms, including an R1 rifle and a machine gun, were stolen.

Nine others were seriously wounded and were in a serious condition in hospital.

No arrests have yet been made.

Meanwhile, police have appealed to motorists to try and avoid using roads and exercise caution near black townships after mob attacks which claimed the life of one motorist and led to the injuring of three others last week.

Police said motorists should try to use alternative routes rather than drive through townships.

They said 25 people had been injured, several of them policemen, in the latest violence, which was continuing despite pleas for calm.

Five of those killed died in Natal — apart from the 15 at Hammarsdale — where feuding between Inkatha and the United Democratic Front has left about 3 000 people dead over the past two years.

An SAP spokesman said yesterday police would look into the possibility, as part of normal policing duties, of increasing patrols in areas where highways passed through or near townships where violence had erupted.

The following unrest-related deaths in Natal were reported:

■ Two men were shot dead when shots were fired at a house in Umlazi near Durban, while another man was stabbed to death in the same area by a mob.

■ A man was stabbed to death by a mob in Amaoti.

■ A man was set alight by a mob which first stabbed him to death in Imbali, near Pietermaritzburg.

■ At least eight people have died in unrest on the Reef since Friday.

SAP warn of mob terror after attacks on motorists

Daily News Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG: Police have warned motorists to exercise caution near townships after mob attacks on motorists left one man dead and three people injured last week.

And last night buses ferrying passengers between Sun City and Johannesburg were stoned in Bophuthatswana, leaving a woman injured.

South African Police said buses were attacked on the road after a man was apparently run down.

A woman was cut in the face by flying glass in one of the attacks, and in the Kekana area one vehicle was burnt out.

One of the deaths in last week's attacks was ascribed by police to the "Zulu paranoia" sweeping Reef townships lately. Fear of Zulu vigilantes also led to the death of a Sandton businessman killed by a mob near Evaton in the Vaal Triangle on Friday.

Police said 25 people were injured, several of them policemen, in the latest violence, which is continuing despite pleas for calm.

Five of those killed were murdered in Natal, where feuding between Inkatha and the United Democratic Front has left about 3 000 people dead over the last two years.

An SAP spokesman said yesterday police would look into the possibility, as part of normal policing duties, of increasing patrols in areas where highways passed through or near townships where violence had erupted.

The statement was made after Sandton businessman Mr Enley Corfe (40) was killed with a panga when a mob attacked his car on the Golden Highway near Vereeniging on Friday, and a 17-year-old girl was struck in the head with a pitchfork during a mob attack on motorists in Vanderbijlpark.

Police are offering a R5 000 reward for information on Mr Corfe's killers.

In a terror attack by suspected ANC members, a limpet mine exploded outside Soweto's Moroka police station at the weekend. No one was injured.

Hang glider man dies

JOHANNESBURG: A 36-year-old SABC engineer was killed instantly yesterday when the experimental hang glider he was testing at Schoemansville, Hartbeespoort, lost height and crashed.

The engineer, Mr Juan Garcia Morales, was about 50 metres above the ground and about to land on a rugby field when the hang glider banked and plummeted to the ground.

Mr Morales had the high-speed hang glider, a Radiant and the only one of its kind in the country, specially built for him in Spain.

According to eye-witnesses, the weather was ideal for hang gliding and Mr Morales was at the right height and speed for a landing when the accident happened. Mr Morales was not married. — Daily News correspondent

Police probe UDF link

JOHANNESBURG: Police are probing the possibility that the policeman accused — and later shot while allegedly trying to escape — of the murder of the commander of the Pietermaritzburg Riot Squad was linked to the UDF, a

CISKEI AHOY FOR BOARDSAILORS

A NUMBER of boardsailors from Durban will be going to the Ciskei for the Sun International Sailway boardsailing competition to be held at the Mpekweni Sun and Fish River Sun resorts from April 5 to 8. Having some early practice is blonde Janine Wolf and Lisa van Daisan. The event is open to all Boardsailing Association of South Africa members and families. There are plenty of prizes to be won.

ANC set to get clearance for talks

Daily News Correspondents

LUSAKA: The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) is today expected to give the green light for negotiations between the ANC and South Africa.

At today's meeting of the OAU ad-hoc committee on Southern Africa, African leaders are also expected to approve the formation of an OAU group in charge of keep-

activity in which leaders from all over the world will gather in Windhoek for Namibia's independence. KwaZulu's Chief Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi returned yesterday from what he described as a "high-level reception" in Zambia where

pected to brief the other heads of state attending today's meeting on his talks with Dr Buthelezi.

Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze will arrive in Zambia today and is expected to be briefed by President Kaunda on today's OAU meeting.

On his return yesterday, Dr

Paint causes cancer scare

JOHANNESBURG: A paint which, in a dry dust form, is thought to be cancer-causing, is being removed from hardware store shelves all over the country.

The paint, zinc chromate, contains a yellow-coloured anti-corrosion

HARDENED POLICE SHOCKED BY BRUTAL MURDER OF NATAL FARMER

Pietermaritzburg Bureau

THE BRUTAL butchering of a Karkloof "loner" farmer Mr Arthur Duncan Johnstone (66) at his home last week was described today by hardened policemen as possibly the goriest they had seen.

The dead man's intestines were in his kitchen and there were indications that he had been tortured since Thursday. His body, mutilated and charred after apparent attempts to burn it, was found in a boiler late on Friday.

Three men, two aged 20 and one of 18, are due to appear in court today in connection with the killing.

Mr Johnstone was seen by neighbours on Thursday evening stoking a boiler.

A man who lives on Mr Johnstone's property and works in Howick found on Friday afternoon that that day's newspaper had not been collected and that Mr Johnstone's cows had not been let out of the shed.

The police were called and two suspects who were wearing Mr Johnstone's takkies were arrested. There was a third man who was hiding in a cupboard in the house.

Mr Johnstone had worked in the Department of Agriculture's extension office at Howick and he seemed to prefer his own company and declined invitations to meals.

A brother, Mr George Johnstone, lives at Dannhauser, a sister, Sister Cathline Johnstone, is a nun near Durban, and two other sisters are Mrs Bobby Gerred and Mrs Joyce Cawood, both of Johannesburg.

• Karkloof farmers and other people are meeting at the Karkloof Country Club today to discuss lawlessness in the area.

Berserk warder in killing spree

A PRISON warder stole his father's gun and went berserk at the weekend, killing his aunt and wounding his wife and father-in-law on the Natal South Coast.

Police said an [illegible] man had an argument with his wife, Mrs Charmaine [illegible], on Saturday at his home in Park Rynie.

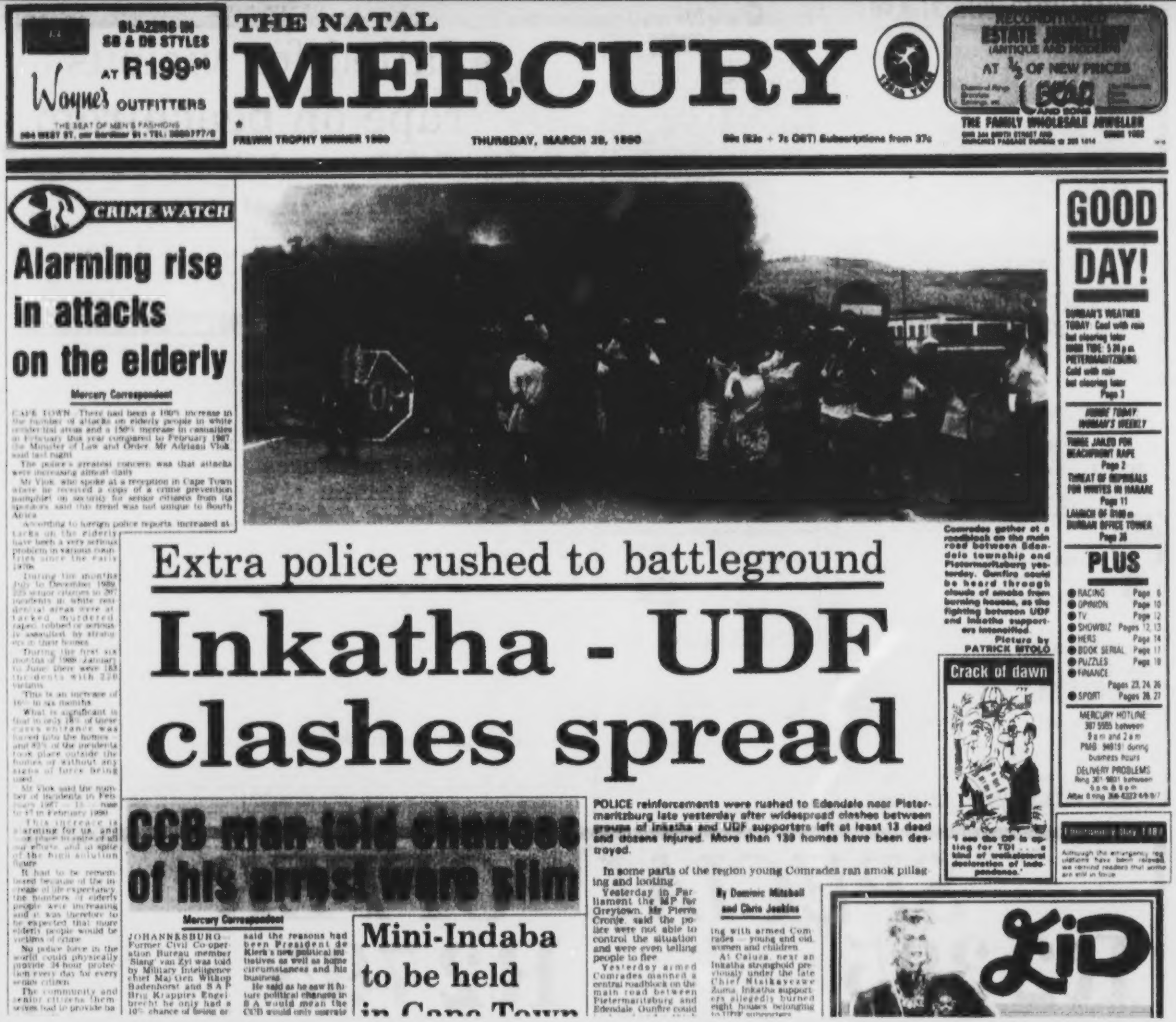
The man then went to his policeman father's house and stole a gun. He returned to the flat and began firing shots.

[illegible]

Police said the man then attempted to kill himself by placing the gun to his head. Police who arrived at the scene managed to talk the man out of killing himself.

A man is in police custody and is to appear in court soon. — Crime Reporter

JOHN ROLFE Classic CIGARETTES



BLAZERS IN SB & DB STYLES AT R199.⁹⁹ Wayne's OUTFITTERS THE SEAT OF MEN'S FASHIONS

THE NATAL
MERCURY

FREWIN TROPHY WINNER 1989 THURSDAY, MARCH 29, 1990

RECONDITIONED ESTATE JEWELLERY (ANTIQUE AND MODERN) AT ⅓ OF NEW PRICES THE FAMILY WHOLESALE JEWELLER

CRIME WATCH

Alarming rise in attacks on the elderly

Mercury Correspondent

CAPE TOWN — There had been a 100% increase in the number of attacks on elderly people in white residential areas and a 150% increase in casualties in February this year compared to February 1987, the Minister of Law and Order, Mr Adriaan Vlok, said last night.

The police's greatest concern was that attacks were increasing almost daily.

Mr Vlok, who spoke at a reception in Cape Town where he received a copy of a crime prevention pamphlet on security for senior citizens from its sponsors, said this trend was not unique to South Africa.

According to foreign police reports, increased attacks on the elderly have been a very serious problem in various countries since the early 1970s.

Extra police rushed to battleground

Inkatha - UDF clashes spread

Comrades gather at a roadblock on the main road between Edendale township and Pietermaritzburg yesterday. Gunfire could be heard through clouds of smoke from burning houses, as the fighting between UDF and Inkatha supporters intensified.

Picture by PATRICK MTOLO

POLICE reinforcements were rushed to Edendale near Pietermaritzburg late yesterday after widespread clashes between groups of Inkatha and UDF supporters left at least 13 dead and dozens injured. More than 130 homes have been destroyed.

In some parts of the region young Comrades ran amok pillaging and looting.

By Dominic Mitchell and Chris Jenkins

Yesterday in Parliament the MP for Greytown, Mr Pierre Cronje, said the police were not able to control the situation and were even telling people to flee.

Yesterday armed Comrades manned a central roadblock on the main road between Pietermaritzburg and Edendale. Gunfire could

ing with armed Comrades — young and old, women and children.

At Caluza, near an Inkatha stronghold previously under the late Chief Ntsikayezwe Zuma, Inkatha supporters allegedly burned eight houses belonging to UDF supporters

CCB man told chances of his arrest were slim

Mercury Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — Former Civil Co-operation Bureau member 'Slang' van Zyl was told by Military Intelligence chief Maj Gen Witkop Badenhorst and SAP Brig Krappies Engelbrecht he only had a 10% chance of being ar

said the reasons had been President de Klerk's new political initiatives as well as home circumstances and his business.

He said as he saw it future political changes in SA would mean the CCB would only operate

Mini-Indaba to be held in Cape Town

GOOD DAY!

DURBAN'S WEATHER TODAY: Cool with rain but clearing later
HIGH TIDE: 5.30 p.m.
PIETERMARITZBURG Cold with rain but clearing later
Page 3

INSIDE TODAY DURBAN'S WEEKLY

THREE JAILED FOR BEACHFRONT RAPE
Page 2

THREAT OF REPRISALS FOR WHITES IN HARARE
Page 11

LAUNCH OF R100m DURBAN OFFICE TOWER
Page 26

PLUS

● RACING	Page 6
● OPINION	Page 10
● TV	Page 12
● SHOWBIZ	Pages 12, 13
● HERS	Page 14
● BOOK SERIAL	Page 17
● PUZZLES	Page 18
● FINANCE	Pages 23, 24, 26
● SPORT	Pages 26, 27

MERCURY HOTLINE 307 5505 between 9 a m and 2 a m
PMB 949191 during business hours

Crack of dawn

'I see the DP is opting for TDI . . . a kind of unilateral declaration of independence.'

Emergency Day 1187

Although the emergency regulations have been relaxed, we remind readers that some are still in force.

media lead to an examination of who makes decisions about staffing, as well as the selection and presentation of information;

- how a 'professional culture' or value system, might pervade the media in such a way as to regulate information for the benefit of the political status quo and/or big business, perpetuating such interests;
- the way the mass media operated, impacted on, and reflected the political and economic systems in society, stressing how it was evident that whole societies capitulated their freedoms of speech and rights to reproduce information by virtue of dominant groups using the media as means of social control;
- how writers, news editors, editors and produc-

ers individually and collectively came to the production process with their own baggage, their own values, pre-conceptions, bias and prejudices.

My own investigation into the way in which the Natal press has reported the conflict in this area has shown how useful this analysis is in identifying both the interests behind the media and helps us answer some of the quesions about why the media does what it does.

Information gathering

Finding *new information* and *accurate information* is an important commodity for research and for education generally. Research of whatever kind requires methods of obtaining information which is reliable and continuous. In this search the following comprise the research processes:

- finding 'facts' and establishing where to get them;
- showing how information about people, groups or society has a history, and how or why this is relevant;
- being able to make the connections between sets of information that help us make sense of what is going on;
- being able to make connections between the information resources of, for example, history and geography syllabuses and social reality as it is reported by the media. These processes are essential for developing a sense of serious social discourse.

How to assemble 'good' information

During what has been referred to as B.J. Vorster's 'jackboot years' of the 1960s and 1970s, to some of us, the years of the 'police state' in South Africa with its attendant levels of censorship, the only way readers could make sense of political or military news was to make inferences by reading between the lines. Similar inferences have had to be drawn by Natal readers and listeners for years where the interests of black people have been concerned. This has been particularly true of newspapers since the labour strikes of 1973, and what is termed the Natal conflict since 1985, initially signified by the sacking of properties in Inanda and the development of the phenomenon of 'hit-squads'.

Until journalists in the Natal press learn to write on the lines again, we as readers, teachers and educators have to employ strategies not only to interpret what the media produces, but also to get our hands on good information. I suggest some of the following techniques might be useful:

- We need to *read news reports in a consistent way* as well as every news backgrounder or feature article that reflects the Natal conflict with the view to developing our own analyses;
- We also need *to dig out information*. This would include in media terms, reading magazine articles, obtaining conference papers, reports, submissions and petitions by political, social organisations and groups.
- We can *secure the help of organisations* and groups focussed on the Natal violence with a view to making direct information known to one's audiences/classes.
- We can ask a range of groups involved with or *directly affected by the violence* to give direct verbal information from different perspectives: ANC/UDF/COSATU on the one hand, and Inkatha on the other; the police, the army, trade unionists, Church groups, health and education groups; community leaders and residents' associations; local government leaders such as KwaZulu MPs;

women's groups (leagues and brigades) and youth groups (leagues and brigades).

- We can obtain information and direct *inputs from organisations concerned with monitoring or assessing* the violence such as: IDASA, the Black Sash, the Inkatha Institute, University of Natal (Pmb) Adult Education Centre, the Democratic Party's monitoring group; Association of Democratic Journalists, SA Union of Journalists, Media Workers Association of South Africa, as well as individual journalists and academic researchers; and more recently, the African National Congress.
- In order to obtain information we need to *ask questions* of every sort. Clearly there are what we might feel are obvious questions, which have simply disappeared out of view because there is an assumption that the situation is cloaked with so much intrigue, or is too complex. Also, part of what we are doing in the process of gathering our own information is to *compare this information* with that used by the media.
- We need to learn to *analyse* situations once we have what we regard as useful or 'good' information, that is, reasonably reliable information that gives a range of different perspectives. Here sociological techniques become useful when looking at complex social and political life.
- We can employ social science *'debunking' techniques* that allow us to question every level of the complex social whole. This means not only questioning the irrational elements of information presented but the 'layers' of meanings, no matter what holy cows or social niceties we might encounter. Such an inquiry allows us to go below the appearances or manifest meanings, to look at the real social issues, the hidden or latent meanings.
- Enquiry using techniques of the social sciences suggest that there are *links between the social, the political, and the economic* which compact on one another, thus suggesting complexity rather than simple, reductable answers to social reality.
- Similarly the value of putting what one is examining into a *historical context* is crucial in any social inquiry. It often helps us explain events and human behaviour in terms of on ongoing social process.

Part of learning to analyse society and complex questions such as social conflict or war requires consistency and a certain degree of rigor. The value of such an analysis to teachers and lecturers as well as to community, service or political groups is that it is part of a larger approach to research. It is about developing a methodology. Clearly we all have limited time and resources to 'find out what's really happening'. So many of us learn by habit to read the same newspapers; and to rely on information provided for us by radio and televison, because it is so accessible.

New approaches to obtaining useful information could include: interviewing, developing oral histories, conducting 'social surveys' within communities and employing systematic survey techniques, clearly at a level that will allow pupils or students to recognise the value of the methodology. Part of such an 'adventure' into ways of making information resources work for one is to ensure pupils and students become participants in the process.

Activity

A. *Critically analyse* the reports enclosed evaluating them against the Chibnall's 'news imperatives' which state:

- news is event-orientated;

- news puts an emphasis on the dramatic;
- news has the effect of trivialising issues, focussing on effects rather than causes of social problems;
- news tends to focus on individuals whom it personalises and cultivates;
- news eliminates the shades of grey in situations and tends to simplify all situations;
- news writers tend to use a conventional frame of reference of experts, officials, and public figures who perpetuate the status quo.

1. The article headlined 'Inkatha - UDF clashes spread' in *The Natal Mercury* of March 29, 1990.
2. The picture and caption of the same publication.
3. The article '15 die after bloody battle in township' of the *Daily News* of March 19, 1990.
4. Compare 'Blood bathes tiny township' in *City Press*, of Jan 18, 1987. with 'Thousands flee Valley of Death as violence spreads' in *Saturday Star* of March 31, 1990.

B. *Interview* members of a social group other than your own and find out whether or not their reading of the reports links them to the violence in terms of their life experience or social situation. If not, in what way do they find the reports 'distant' or 'remote' or 'abstract'? ■

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POLITICAL CARTOONS
Uncooperative Forms of Communication?

Ralph Adendorff

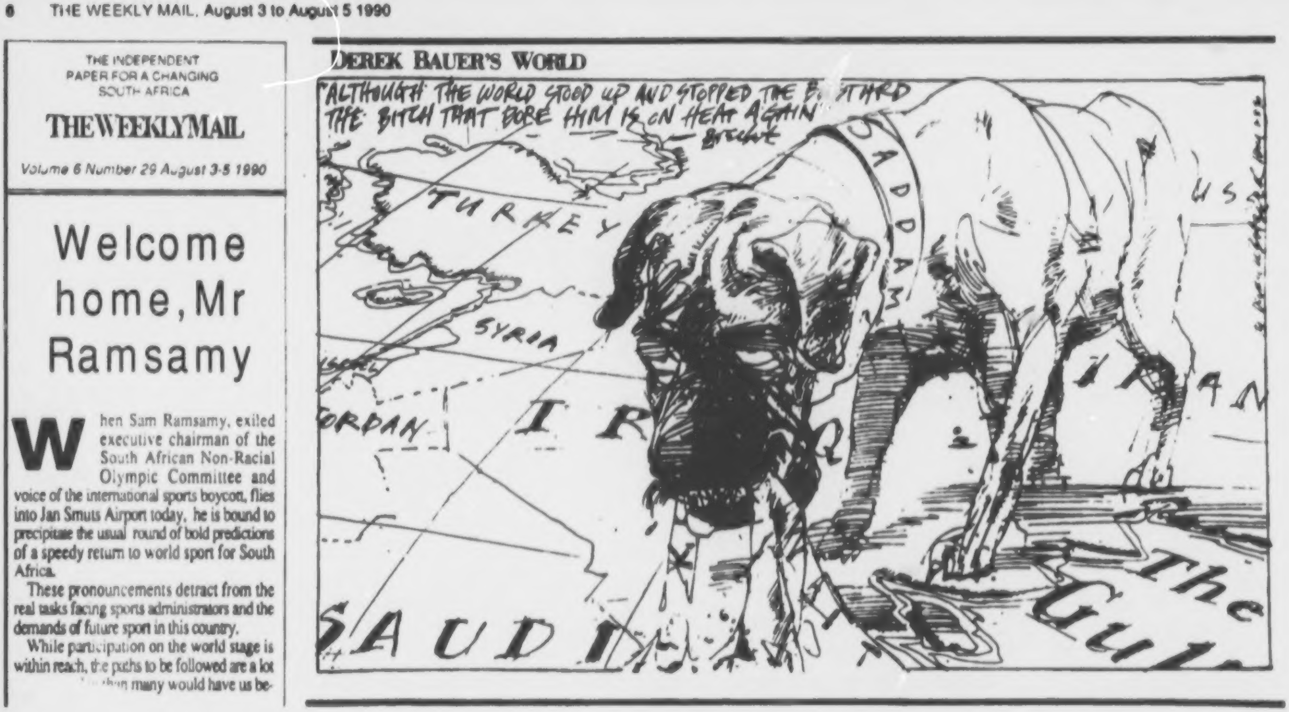
Introduction

Most daily newspapers in South Africa have a political cartoon which appears on the editorial page. This cartoon deals, as a rule, with topical issues, usually, but not inevitably, political ones. The cartoon is an integral part of the newspaper, not an incidental one. It provides the reader, in effect, with a kind of daily summary and interpretation of prominent current affairs, or else it predicts possible outcomes. As a message, the cartoon is cryptic and indirect. As a result, there is a considerable mismatch or disparity between the overt, 'literal', surface meaning and the deeper, covert, meaning that it is possible to arrive at. In order to get at this deeper meaning one needs to be able to draw on background and other knowledge. Such knowledge, in fact, is assumed by the cartoonist to be accessible to the reader or else to be readily inferrable by him or her. To the person who lacks the ability to fill in the necessary information, however, i.e., to flesh out what has not been made explicit, the cartoonist must appear to be a strangely uncooperative communicator. Furthermore, because cartoonists rely on caricature and other forms of distortion, and because their drawings often literalize information which, if spoken or written, would be conveyed metaphorically, cartoonists produce unexpected effects, and so can seem in addition to be providing playful treatments of their subject matter. They can seem, because of this, to be deliberately confusing the reader.

In what follows I will be interpreting four political cartoons which I have drawn from the established press in this country. In each case my main aim will be to show that the cartoons are complex forms of interaction, and that they presuppose a considerable range of background knowledge on the part of their readers, which I shall attempt to detail. In doing so, of course, I will be distorting the processes which normally underlie the interaction between cartoonist and reader. Reading a cartoon, in reality, takes place in a split second (perhaps slightly longer) and it, as well as the cartoonist's construction of it, is nothing like as conscious or as deliberate as my account will imply. Finally, I shall argue that media education, on the evidence of my analyses, must take the role of such *background information* very seriously, particularly if media messages are to be accessible to individuals from different backgrounds.

Cartoon 1: The Dog Saddam

A dog, a name ('Saddam') and a selection of geographical details depicted on a map are the major overt clues which indicate that Saddam Hussein is the topic of this, the first cartoon which I shall consider. This deduction is further confirmed by the similarity between the dog's face and Hussein's. We know this from seeing it on television. This is the easy part of the interpre-



6 THE WEEKLY MAIL, August 3 to August 5 1990

THE INDEPENDENT
PAPER FOR A CHANGING
SOUTH AFRICA

THE WEEKLY MAIL

Volume 6 Number 29 August 3-5 1990

Welcome home, Mr Ramsamy

When Sam Ramsamy, exiled executive chairman of the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee and voice of the international sports boycott, flies into Jan Smuts Airport today, he is bound to precipitate the usual round of bold predictions of a speedy return to world sport for South Africa.

These pronouncements detract from the real tasks facing sports administrators and the demands of future sport in this country.

While participation on the world stage is within reach, the paths to be followed are a lot [illegible] than many would have us be-

DEREK BAUER'S WORLD

"ALTHOUGH THE WORLD STOOD UP AND STOPPED THE BASTARD
THE BITCH THAT BORE HIM IS ON HEAT AGAIN"
— BRECHT
TURKEY
SYRIA
JORDAN
IRAQ
SAUDI
SADDAM
US
IRAN
The Gulf

Cartoon 1

tation. Less accessible is the information which is metaphorical, and therefore exists on a more covert level. Such information is arrived at through processes of inferencing in which the reader appeals to what s/he considers to be background information that the cartoonist sees as important. Let's start with the fact that Saddam Hussein is depicted as a dog. To call someone a dog, significantly, is to depreciate them. This is doubly so in Muslim societies. These, I think, are links which Bauer intends us to make. Hussein is a dog. Interpretation does not stop there, though, because the dog in the cartoon is not an ordinary dog. If we look closely at the depiction of it we see that it is an unstable dog. It is rabid-looking and crazed and is caught in the act of tearing up something in its teeth (here, 'Kuwait'), as indeed rabid dogs do. These unpleasant (and largely implicit) associations in turn remind one of the English idiom 'a mad dog' and its connotations of bestiality and irrationality, and encourage one to suppress possibly competing associations of loyalty and other related qualities which are linked with the idea of a dog being man's best friend.

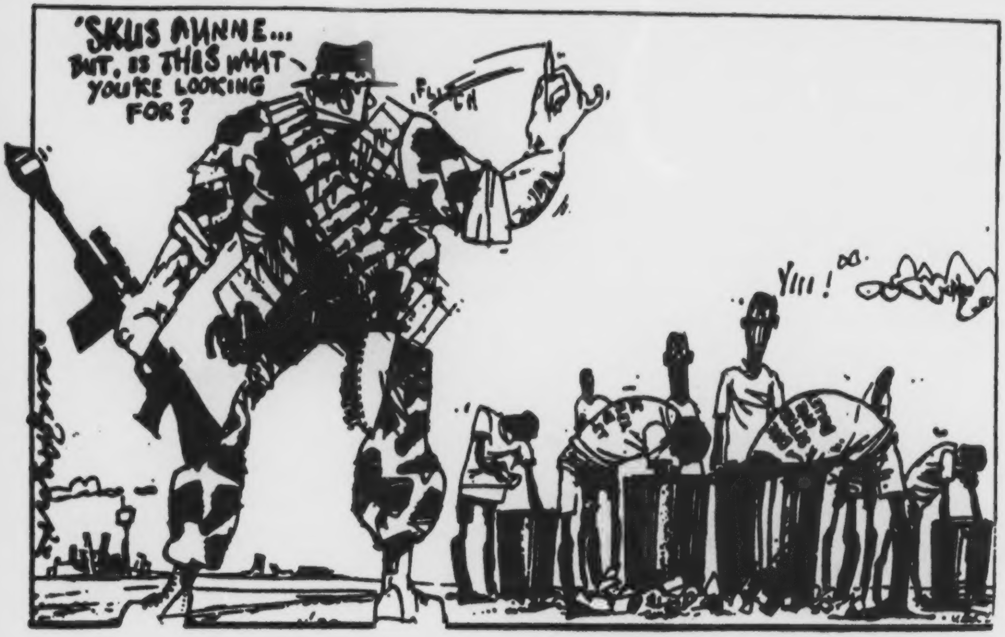
What I am doing at present (and this will be my strategy throughout) is to verbalize for the reader the early stages of my interaction with the cartoon. I am looking for meaning in the overt and the covert signals which the cartoonist has provided. I am trying to negotiate an interpretation of the cartoon message as a whole. Viewed slightly differently, what I have done up to this point is to record my attempts as a reader to recreate the cartoonist's message by trying to reconstruct the process by which he imagined that I would get the point of the cartoon.

Let me continue. Beyond the associations which I have mentioned so far related to the depiction of Hussein as a dog, there is a further (literary) 'trigger' which the cartoonist perhaps assumes that the reader can recognize in the graphic and other detail that he has provided, namely, the phrase 'the dogs of war', which is part of a fuller quotation: 'Cry havoc [which is where the original stress falls] and let slip the dogs of war' (Julius Caesar, Act II, Scene 2). The phrase was also frequently linked to Hitler 'unleashing the dogs of war' at the beginning of the Second World War. Knowledge of recent events in the Middle East, regardless of the origins of the expression, certainly tells me that it is appropriate to be thinking in terms of war and associated ideas when considering Saddam Hussein. The dog in the cartoon, therefore, is also a dog of war. The implicit war associations in the cartoon are further reinforced, as also the general ugliness of the dog images which I noted earlier, in the quotation from Brecht which the cartoonist has provided in the top left hand corner of the cartoon. I am not sure of the original context of Brecht's words (Does Bauer require that the reader does, I wonder?), and so have difficulty with the specific referents of 'the bastard', `the bitch' and `him' in it. My thoughts though are that Bauer intends us to infer meaning from our knowledge of history. How does this seem to you: Could the bitch that is referred to not be something like military mania? And are we not intended to infer that, in Saddam Hussein, that same bitch is about to produce new offspring like her previous offspring? Wasn't her previous offspring perhaps Adolf Hitler? If this line of reasoning is acceptable, then my hunch earlier about a link with Hitler is strengthened. Ah, ha!, I say to myself: Last time `the world' had to stand up in order to stop a `bastard' (Hitler). Isn't Bauer predicting that it will need to do so again, to Saddam Hussein?

Stepping back now out of my role as someone negotiating with the cartoonist through the cartoon, to become, for the moment, a less involved analyst, I need to say that my general feeling about this cartoon, and it has been reinforced by others who have seen it, is that it is very 'intellectual'. This is because it requires close and complex as well, at times, as uncertain inferencing from clues like English figures of speech and history. For this reason the cartoonist will be viewed by many who see it, surely, as uncooperative.

Cartoon 2: 'Skuus Manne'

This second cartoon is less of an intellectual puzzle than the previous one, largely because literary and historical allusion play a more restricted role in interpretation. Shared knowledge, instead of being drawn from figures of speech and other literary sources, derives from local knowledge about current socio-political forces, actors and events in this country. Let's turn to the details of the cartoon where, once again, I shall offer a record of my and the cartoonist's interaction with one another, and my attempts in particular to transcend the apparent uncooperativeness of the cartoon.

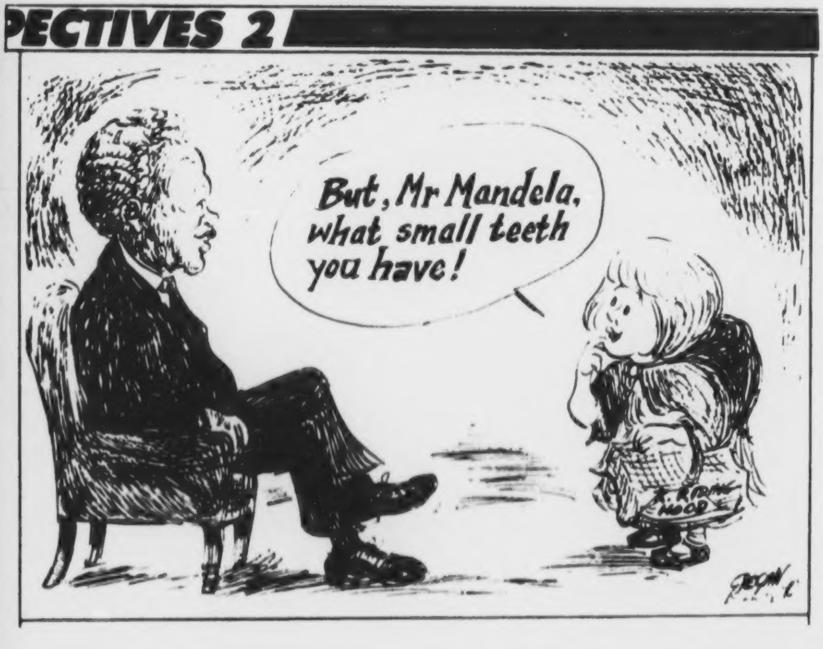

'SKUS AUNNE...
BUT, IS THIS WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR?
YIII!

Cartoon 2

Overtly there are two parties in the cartoon, a heavily-armed white male and a number of unarmed, apparently younger, black males who are searching through garbage bins. This overtly provided information is, however, not enough. One needs to know something about the groups which are on the extremes of the political spectrum in South Africa if one is really to understand who those depicted in the cartoon are and, beyond this, of course, if one is to get to grips with Bauer's general message. From the slogan on their t-shirts ('One Settler One Bullet'), it would seem to me that the black youths are Pan Africanists. The heavily armed white man (with camouflage uniform and, notice, floppy hat) probably symbolizes the right wing or right wing elements within the security forces in the country. Having established these facts, what, then, is the point of the cartoon?

It seems to me that what Bauer is doing is drawing attention on the one hand to the idleness of the Pan Africanists' threat and the unnecessary prominence which their slogan has been given in white ranks. On the other hand, I see him as emphasizing the sinister proportions which the right wing threat has taken on, and the danger which it poses. Additional details which we can infer include: (a) the stark disparities in power of the two groups; (b) the irony and the heartlessness suggested in the words spoken by the White, namely, 'Is this what you're looking for?'. It is a taunting, teasing utterance, and is a small step from the more idiomatic threat with which one might threaten one's child, namely, 'You'll get what you're looking for (not from the garbage bins) if you're not careful'. How many of these associations did the cartoonist have in mind when producing the cartoon, I wonder? Are any of my interpretations at odds with what he intended? Are some of them forced? Ultimately, the meaning of the cartoon is the outcome of (a) my interaction with it, based on what I bring with me to the encounter and (b) the cartoonist's provision for that interaction - not forgetting that meaning, often, is indeterminate. Lastly, we infer that the White is arrogant in his conduct. In this regard we note that 'skuus', ordinarily, is a politeness form, and that 'manne' has associations of solidarity. The speaker in the cartoon, though, intends neither of these and, again, we are required to infer that he does not mean what he says. Extreme South African English dialect (which is what I take the speaker's variety of English to be) and some of its stereotypical associations are also exploited here, which means that the cartoonist presupposes sociolinguistic knowledge of a kind. The Extreme South African English dialect connotes power, arrogance and an uncompromising attitude of mind.

Cartoon 3


PECTIVES 2
But, Mr Mandela, what small teeth you have!
R. RIDING HOOD
GROGAN

Cartoon 3: Mr Mandela & Little Red Riding Hood

Sociocultural information of two different kinds allows us to flesh out what is left implicit in this next cartoon, and so to interpret it. The first kind comes from our understanding of the story of Little Red Riding Hood, a European nursery tale. The second kind relates to our understanding of Nationalist and Conservative Party slogans at different times in the past in South Africa. This, therefore, is historical information. Of the two sources of information, the first is probably the more important in working out the meaning of the cartoon. Without it the reader is confronted with nothing more than a statement ('But, Mr Mandela, what small teeth you have!') and a depiction of that fact (Mr Mandela is represented as literally having small teeth). The message, on an overt level, is simply tautologous and, as such, it seems as if this cartoonist, like the last one whose work we looked at, is also being uncooperative. Is the size of Mr Mandela's teeth in fact significant, we might wonder? But Grogan won't say. In our interpretive efforts, we need to go beyond the apparently uncooperative surface detail provided.

Those who can recall the details of the nursery tale will find it significant that R. Riding Hood's words in the cartoon mirror the ones which she utters in the tale. Of course you will remember, if you know the tale, that in it she speaks them under startlingly different circumstances from those in the cartoon. She also addresses the words to someone whom she assumes to be her grandmother, but whom we as readers know to be a wolf disguised in the grandmother's nightclothes. You will know, moreover, that, earlier, the wolf had *eaten* Red Riding Hood's grandmother. Other information worth recalling is the fact that Red Riding Hood's response to the disguised wolf is one of mild surprise, and that she finds her grandmother's features to be *more* pronounced, not *less* so, as does the Red Riding Hood in this cartoon. The more one interacts with (i.e. ponders over, questions, relates to and extrapolates from) the cartoon and the tale, the more one realizes that the heart of the cartoonist's message lies in our recognition of disparities between the details of the story as represented by Grogan, on the one hand, and provided in standard versions of the story on the other hand. In addition, of course, there is an overlay of political information (given that Mr Mandela is pre-eminently a political symbol) which I want to consider briefly now.

It is important to remember that the cartoon originally appeared on 17 February 1990, i.e. very shortly after Mr Mandela was released from prison. Feelings at the time of his release are worth recalling because there was, as you may recall, unprecedented speculation. This took the form on the one hand, of guessing what Mr Mandela actually looked like and, especially among Whites on the other, of debating what the effects of his release would be in terms of political stability, etc. Many Whites had many misgivings, and many were fearful.

Let's return now to the cartoon, because this information is, I believe, relevant to its interpretation. Notice that R. Riding Hood (who is the epitome of white innocence) encounters in Mandela not a wolf disguised to look friendly, not an odd-looking grandmother with long teeth and evil intentions, but a friendly, genuine, grandfather figure who is perfectly normal, and has ordinary (small) teeth. Little Red Riding Hood is surprised, and this is because, like so many white South Africans at the time, she expects something different (big teeth), but she doesn't find them. What is crucial to interpreting this cartoon is that we recognize that in expecting something and not finding it (as opposed to not expecting something and in fact finding it) the cartoonist has not been true to the nursery tale - and it is only familiarity with the tale which allows one to understand this and to appreciate the reversal.

The relevance of National and Conservative Party political slogans in interpreting the cartoon can be explained quite briefly. Many 'swart-gevaar' tactics - employed as recently in fact (by the Conservative Party) as the last white elections - have exploited the assumed vulnerability of white daughters and white children, in general, in the face of a generalized Black threat to their safety and prosperity. Can the ancestry of the Little Red Riding Hood in the cartoon not therefore be at least partly traced to the 'swart-gevaar' tactics of the National Party and the Conservative Party? Is she not (again, at least partly) a carry over from the assumedly vulnerable little white girl of those slogans?

Cartoon 4: 'We Walk Straight...'

The final cartoon which I have chosen for analysis predates the ones which we have examined so far by about two years. (It was published in the *Daily News* on 1 September, 1988). If we follow the same procedure as we have up to this point and, as readers, examine first the superficial, overt detail supplied by the cartoonist, we once again find ourselves putting together a message which is inconclusive. At best, the pictorial detail represents a literalization of the first part of the written information in the cartoon, i.e. 'We (P.W.Botha, Pik Botha, General Malan and Mr De Klerk) walk straight'. In the remaining part of the written information the four men issue two threats. The cartoon amounts, in other words, to a partial, cryptic, uncooperative message and, again, it is necessary to draw on additional, implicit information, if one is to get the real point of the cartoon.

As a means of short-circuiting matters, let me point out that the utterance of Mr Botha and those who follow him is, in reality, a playground chant which forms part of a game played mainly by bullies - you line up behind one another and then bulldoze whoever gets in your way. I remember it from my primary school days. One can profitably bear in mind, too, the English figures of speech 'going too far' (suggesting lack of self-restraint) and 'going over the edge' (with its suggestions of lunacy), when considering this cartoon. With these two bodies of information in mind, the reader has a much richer basis than otherwise from which to make connections between what is self-evident (e.g. that the four figures are marching towards a precipice, that they are threatening no-one, etc) and what is not self-evident (e.g. why they are doing so).

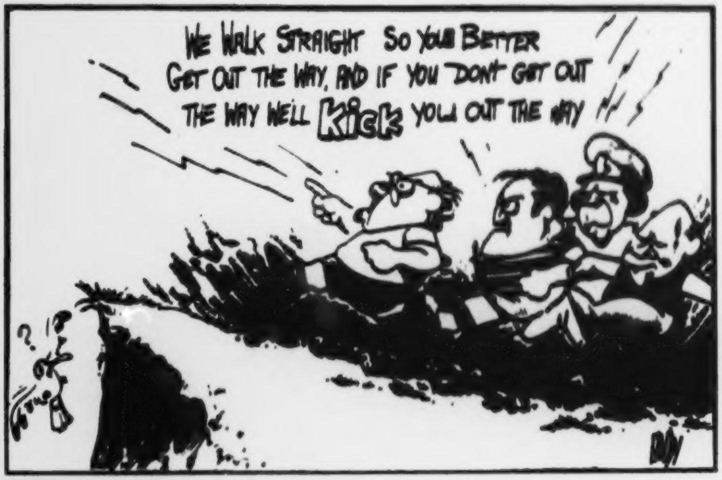
Elsewhere (Adendorff 1990) I have examined this cartoon more fully than it is possible to do here. What for present purposes is most relevant is the general interpretation that I came to there, namely:

> The cartoonist highlights the immaturity, irrationality and fanaticism of the South African Government under the leadership of P.W. Botha. He depicts it as a bullying, self-destructive and therefore stupid government.

Since writing these words a reader has suggested to me that the cartoon is also an illustration of 'kragdadigheid', i.e. 'forcefulness,... reliance on political 'steamroller' tactics' (Branford 1987 pp. 127), ironfistedness, brutality. Such associations are clearly not inappropriate.

Is Andy an uncooperative communicator? The answer is both yes and no. Yes, if you have not played 'We walk straight so you better get out the way' or else don't know about it. No, if you have played or *do* know about it.

Cartoon 4


WE WALK STRAIGHT SO YOU BETTER GET OUT THE WAY, AND IF YOU DON'T GET OUT THE WAY WE'LL KICK YOU OUT THE WAY
?!?
ANDY

Conclusion

In this paper I have offered what might be called a sociolinguistic interpretation of political cartoons, and how they communicate. I have concentrated largely on the kind of *interaction* which takes place between the cartoonist and a reader. I have argued that the cartoonist relies on the reader's ability to recognize that a considerable amount of necessary information has been left implicit. Not only this, he judges that his reader knows what sources of information to turn to, in order to do that inferencing work. What I have also attempted to show is that background information takes a number of forms: metaphorical associations, idioms and other fixed expressions, irony and sarcasm, knowledge of local events and knowledge of events and figures in history, literary allusion, nursery tales and playground chants and games - the last two of which, in all probability, are culture-specific. I have shown that cartoonists are only uncooperative when the reader does not share the background information which the cartoonist leaves implicit. As to the relevance of what I have said to media education, cartoons are an important reminder of the central role of background knowledge in communication, most of which, it seems to me, is acquired in the process of one's socialization. In the past, individuals in this country have been socialized largely in isolation from members of other groups, on account largely of the policy of apartheid, and media messages were directed to these separate groups. As more facilities are shared and as media messages in the future are directed to the greater South African population it will become increasingly important that those media messages are interpretable to a cross-section of South African society. Political cartoons are an instance of media communication and act as something of a metaphor for such communication. For a fuller account of the applied relevance of political cartoons to teaching English as a second language readers might like to consult Adendorff (1989; 1990). ■

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Part V

Training and Empowering

The chapters that make up this part of the publication entitled *Training and Empowering* are concerned with adult and non-formal education. The point of departure for them all is the shared intention to empower those learning about media.

In the first two contributions, the emphasis is on working with teachers who are developing Media Education. The joint article by Robinson and Mentor and that by Criticos are concerned with the involvement of teachers in resource production that will impel them towards critical reflection. Robinson and Mentor base their article firmly in the closed bureaucracy that most teachers in South Africa find themselves (and which too often has become naturalized as the way teaching is). Their project confronts the dilemmas imposed by apartheid education, the nature of education that, they suggest, will remain while we have the teachers spawned in the apartheid system.

> Nevertheless we agree wholeheartedly with Ken Hartshorne when he says 'No post-apartheid education will be possible without post-apartheid teachers'.

A similar integration of theory and practice is outlined by Criticos' experiential approach. Teachers are themselves invited to turn raw materials into effective resources for studying the media.

The remaining papers within this section develop methodologies for training about diverse forms of media, all of which are based on a critical awareness of the way media works. These chapters relate directly to the ideas contained in the chapters in Part Two where issues of teaching modes are considered.

Louw offers a Contemporary Cultural Studies approach when examining cultural production and consumption. He stresses issues of power and of context, encompassing the notion of social struggle. Cultural studies conceives of media training as extending beyond technical competence to the theoretical understandings that will create critical media people, both in terms of theory and practice. McKay's chapter reflects on and elaborates on the comprehensive work the Durban Media Trainers' Group has achieved with their Media Awareness Programme. She analyses problems that have been identified among media workers in anti-apartheid groups. The work that is described in their Media Awareness programme is characterized by a very valuable stress on understanding audiences and distribution. Berndt's auto-critique of the 'mass-line' approach outlines a media training programme undertaken at Community Arts Project (CAP) in 1989, working from a socialist perspective and with a clear commitment to the 'mass-line'. His suggestions lead to a discussion of the 'red-specialist' in the co-op as a way of combining learning and production and simultaneously addressing the economic determinants of learning. Insights offered by Berndt should be most appropriate for other projects undertaking related projects (such as DMTG and FAWO perhaps.) Moving to filmic media, but a project that shares a similarity of approach to that of CAP in certain ways, Maingard discusses issues relating to the FAWO experience for education for a 'Third Cinema'. She reflects on the Alexandra community video project, and considers how it could contribute to the development of a Third cinema within South Africa.

Empowering Teachers through Materials Development

Maureen Robinson and Sandra-Ann Mentor

In this paper we reflect on the experiences of the Materials Development Project (MDP), a publishing project based in the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape.

The broad aim of the MDP is to work with teachers to develop innovative classroom material. As such, we participate in and host workshops to do with curriculum and resource development in a range of subject areas, as well as publishing and distributing material which evolves from these workshops.

Our approach to our work is based on a commitment to building a non-racial and democratic education system in South Africa, and a belief that teachers need to be integrally involved in this process of change. We see our role as being to encourage this involvement by acknowledging the ideas and experiences of teachers who are giving shape to a changing curriculum at classroom level. Through our publications we attempt to facilitate a "voice" for teachers to make their ideas available to a wider community.

The project has been running for 18 months and to date has worked in the subject fields of English, Afrikaans, History, Cultural Studies, Guidance, Geography and Music. Five booklets have been produced, all of which are characterised by content which highlights the everyday experience of South African students, and by a classroom methodology based on co-operation and inquiry. In most cases there has been an attempt to ensure a collective process of conceptualisation of the publications with the teachers concerned.

This paper highlights some of our experiences and reflects on the role of materials development in in-service teacher education.

The Theoretical and Political Context of our Work

It is our hope and intention that the MDP can be said to be contributing to what Aronowitz and Giroux call 'a language of possibility', pointing the way to

> the conditions necessary for new forms of culture, alternative social practices, new modes of communication, and a practical vision for the future. (Aronowitz and Giroux, pp. 37)

Aronowitz and Giroux describe the schooling system in the United States of America as a 'management pedagogy', in which teachers are expected to be obedient civil servants carrying out the orders of the bureaucracy in which they function. In our work we are acutely aware of the disempowerment of teachers within the South African educational hierarchy, as the potential for critical reflection on the part of teachers struggles to emerge within a system of educational control, with its inspections, standardized syllabi, overloaded timetables and prepackaged textbooks.

The teachers with whom we work often respond to ideas for creative teaching with some cynicism, remarking that such ideas are 'all very well and good, but...' Teaching methods which emphasise active participation and critical reflection on the part of both students and teachers are seen as 'impractical' and for good reason - they *are* relatively impractical in a school system which structures itself around hierarchy, passivity and obedience.

However, at the same time as bureaucratic and political control is exerted on our teaching profession, so the educational arena remains one of the most volatile sites of struggle against the apartheid state. We refer again to Aronowitz and Giroux who critique radical theories of schooling which emphasise power as a concept of domination. They argue for a dialectical understanding of social control, arguing that

> ...power is both a negative and positive force ...[it] is at the root of all forms of behaviour in which people say no, struggle, resist, use oppositional modes of discourse, and fight for a different vision of the future ... The notion of power that underscores this positive view of social control takes as its starting point the empowerment of teachers and students and the confirmation of their histories and possibilities. (Aronowitz and Giroux, pp. 155)

This discussion provides us in the MDP with a theoretical location for our work, as we attempt to draw on the energy of those teachers who are seeking to transform authoritarian curriculum practices. What we hope to do is to give expression to the 'language of possibility', by publishing and distributing resources which illustrate forms of resistance at classroom level.

This theoretical context helps us to reflect on our work, but it is the political context of education in South Africa that is most important in motivating our action. People's Education, with its emphasis on linking educational change to political change and democratising classrooms and schools, embodies a most dynamic form of critical pedagogy, rooted as it is in the realities of a whole society undergoing transformation.

Our work concerns itself with the contribution that teachers can and need to make to the building of People's Education. And here we set ourselves modest aims; for while we acknowledge that People's classrooms cannot be defined outside of broader political struggles, our particular contribution is in the field of curriculum practice. How this practice relates to struggles around democratic control of education and long-term policy formation is a source of constant reflection, as we deliberate on the priorities and strategy of our work.

Nevertheless we agree wholeheartedly with Ken Hartshorne when he says 'No post-apartheid education will be possible without post-apartheid teachers' (Hartshorne, 1986, pp. 131). And we continually assert, in the midst of an ongoing educational crisis where the need for basic facilities seems more urgent than teacher workshops, that we cannot ignore the human resources of our country or turn a blind eye to the authoritarian politics of most classrooms.

Why Involve Teachers in Resource Production?

With all the best political and educational intentions in the world, the daily routine of trying to work with teachers on materials development is a difficult one. In fact, some would argue that, considering the overloaded working conditions of most teachers, it would be more useful to provide teachers with packages of new material rather than try involve them in a time-consuming process of collective work.

However the key issue for us is to break the dependency of teachers on material which is handed out by higher authorities (however 'progressive' the material or the authorities) and which is then used without critical reflection on the part of the teacher. We believe that it is important not to try and create material which is 'teacher-proof', because ultimately it is the teacher's understanding and use of that material which makes it educational or not. For us, therefore, the mediation of teachers in the production of new material is crucial, even though in reality the small-scale nature of our project does not allow for intensive participation by large numbers of teachers.

Aronowitz and Giroux are scathing in their critique of the 'deskilling' which the use of textbooks engenders in teachers:

> By dictating every aspect of the teaching process these curriculum packages reproduce standardization and control that reduces the teacher to the status of a mere technician implementing ideologies and interests constructed by people external to the actual experiences of his or her classroom and student interests. (Aronowitz and Giroux, pp. 149)

They refer to Apple who argues that, in using textbooks designed by others, teachers lose the skills associated with curriculum design. The conceptualisation of the teaching and learning process becomes separated from the execution thereof, and teachers become *transmitters* rather than *producers* of knowledge. Paulo Freire uses the term 'gnosiological cycle' to refer to the interconnection between the production and the knowing of new knowledge. He argues that students are usually asked only to memorize knowledge that has been produced somewhere else, rather than being encouraged to contribute to the design of their own learning process. As such, they (and one could use the same argument about teachers) lose some of the indispensable qualities which are demanded in the production of knowledge:

> ...action, critical reflection, curiosity, demanding inquiry, uneasiness, uncertainty - ... indispensable to the cognitive subject, to the person who learns! (Freire and Shor, 1987, pp. 8)

For us, then, the involvement of teachers in materials development, needs to be seen in the context of an overall strategy towards teacher empowerment. We feel that it is crucial that teachers are respected and developed as educators, that they not be seen (and indeed that they not see themselves) as functionaries carrying out what has been deemed by others to be best for them to do in their classes. We need to build a tradition of action and reflection, of integrating theory and practice, with a view to grassroots engagement in the curriculum process. Given the chance and the encouragement, there is a great wealth of skill and experience to be shared and debated, in the interests of deepening the quality of our education system.

The Challenge of Teacher Empowerment

In this section we reflect on the process of involving teachers in materials development, and consider in particular the issue of strategies towards teacher empowerment.

Our experiences over the last eighteen months have provided us with a sober assessment of the challenge of our work. Specifically, we have experienced the difficulty of trying to intervene in an educational system characterised by a relatively closed bureaucracy, and influenced on a daily basis by the social and political turmoil in our country.

At the most basic level, we have found the scheduling of meetings and workshops with teachers to be a most frustrating task. Reflection on one's own teaching, it would seem, is the last priority in an educational programme, coming somewhere after sport, politics, examinations, staff meetings or domestic duties. For this reason we have decided to play a proactive role in scheduling programmes, and to hold them during the school day. In this way we assert the right (and responsibility) of teachers to be involved in a process of reflection *as part of their work* and not as an optional extra. We have found that this strategy leads to increased numbers in workshops - however we are not sure to what extent this is due to the chance to escape school early!

Inviting teachers to meetings during school hours is not, however, always practical, and one has to then fit in with all the competing interests in a teacher's day. This immediately indicates one of the major tensions in our work: on the one hand one seeks to establish an in-depth process of involvement with the teachers, on the other hand one does not want to be continually held up in the production of the materials. We have noted this same tension in many teachers themselves: on the one hand they call for close consultation in developing materials, on the other hand they are often reluctant to commit themselves to the time that is needed for this. The intention of MDP to empower teachers becomes problematic, as many teachers are practically not in a position to assume responsibility for coordinating and controlling a project. Indeed sometimes we question whether teachers are really developing skills through our work - or is it ourselves as outside facilitators who are learning most from the interaction?

The difficulty of finding meeting times with teachers also affects the quality of our work, in that we do not always have the opportunity to workshop and evaluate material sufficiently once it has been produced. Even when teachers agree to test and evaluate materials during normal teaching hours, we find that they struggle to find time to do this in between all the syllabus demands in an often disrupted school day.

This experience begs three questions. Firstly - one might ask - is the difficulty with finding time not due to insufficient motivation on the part of teachers for engaging with new materials? And, partly related to this, if materials were more specifically syllabus-based, would they not be used more readily? And, to take it further, is there any point in developing new materials while the content of the teaching day remains structured in the way it is?

We see the significance of these questions as going beyond the immediate concerns of the MDP. If People's Education is to take root in our classrooms, it needs to seriously address the issue of curriculum innovation with teachers who are not used to taking risks in their work. Prepackaged curriculum materials are safe, in that they provide clear parameters of content and methodology for both students and teachers. In asking teachers to become 'reflective practitioners' (D. Schon, 1983), we are taking on the difficult task of transforming not only an educational structure, but also a teacher's secure way of working. We have found in our work a worrying lack of confidence and skill (as well as resistance) amongst many teachers to break away from transmission teaching and dependency on the textbook, and are acutely aware of the importance of engaging slowly and unthreateningly with the process of teacher 're-education'.

In the short term we see ourselves as working within syllabus constraints and encouraging teachers to take the many gaps that we feel do exist. However, this remains a piecemeal approach, and does not address the structural changes that are needed to develop a changed perception of the role of the teacher. In-service training, we believe, should be placed high on the agenda of those seeking to transform the curriculum, and must take into consideration the real issue of motivating teachers to become actively engaged in conceptualising, writing, and *using*, new materials.

It is here that we see the political task of teacher organisations merging with their educational task. The struggle for People's Education includes a struggle for new methods and materials as well as a struggle for better working conditions for teachers. Better working conditions, we would argue, needs to include time and recognition for efforts to reflect on one's teaching, to design material, to evaluate and research and to share one's experiences. If better working conditions are defined as more facilities or higher salaries only, then we run the risk of an education system which remains qualitatively the same, but more comfortably so. What we are seeking, in our work, is a fundamental redefinition of the teacher's role in the education process.

We have found that there is a usually quite a rush at teacher workshops and conferences to purchase new material (particularly those with the words 'People's Education' in the title!). This seems to indicate a grassroots enthusiasm for exposure to current debates in the educational arena, something which we feel could be harnessed more directly by teacher organisations. But, to labour a point, we are not sure that forums are being created, either at school or at meetings, to debate and discuss what it is that the teachers have so eagerly purchased. Although we are fully aware, and in support of, the many political demands of the progressive teacher organisations, we feel that materials writing in itself forms a site of struggle which could be more effectively harnessed in building organisation.

In coming together to discuss their ideas, teachers can begin to break through their isolation to establish a practice of collective research. And in exploring and developing methodology and materials, teachers will be able to make their contribution to People's Education a concrete reality. The experience of these forums can, we believe, build teachers' own confidence and skill, thus creating a base for their own empowerment as educators who need to be taken seriously.

It is important, however, to be aware of the potential contradications embedded in the attempt to place materials development in the hands of teachers. We cannot assume that teachers will spontaneously be in a position to reconceptualise the categories with which they have been working over many years. Although the MDP, for example, sees itself as facilitating a process of teacher involvement, it does not see itself as being a conduit for 'recycling' accepted assumptions and practices. In this regard, we *do* assume for ourselves some kind of directive responsibility in introducing and commenting on ideas from teachers. Our educational system is in transition, with competing political demands, and we are unashamed in seeking to promote materials which we feel advance the cause of People's Education. But we are only too aware that the further away our material is from the existing school syllabus, the less likely it is to be used by teachers.

In Conclusion

Our experiences have indicated some of the issues to consider in attempting to develop a process of teacher empowerment through materials writing. In short, we see curriculum innovation for People's Education as needing both short- and long-term strategies. In the short-term, we need to bring teachers together to build their confidence and skill in developing and evaluating classroom material. In the long-term we need to impact on the education system by challenging the ideological and material conditions within which teachers work, and by developing a tradition of the teacher as a 'transformative intellectual ... [who] makes knowledge meaningful, critical and ultimately emancipatory.' (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1987, pp. 36-37)

It seems to us that in-service groupings like the MDP which seek to give form to this view of the teacher need to contribute at three levels, namely action, reflection and organisation. By action we mean the production of new materials, by reflection debating and evaluating the aims and use of these materials, and by organisation facilitating teacher networking. All of these will, however, be little more than icing on the cake unless the initiative for curriculum development can be grasped by those engaged in transforming the racist and authoritarian base of our present education system. ■

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Developing Resources for a Media Education Programme

Costas Criticos

Introduction

This chapter is based on the workshop *Developing Educational Resources for a Media Education Programme* and was presented at the *Developing Media Education in the 1990s* conference. The workshop followed immediately after an associated workshop *Empowering Teachers through Materials Development* which was presented by Maureen Robinson and Sandra-Ann Mentor of the Materials Development Project at the University of the Western Cape. The Robinson and Mentor workshop and the preceding chapter present a coherent argument for an active and creative teaching profession. They show that the optimism of critical pedagogy and people's education are realizable goals, notwithstanding the differential provision of education and the debilitating effects of inflexible education authorities.

I will attempt to continue the Robinson and Mentor debate with the focus on the classroom and, more specifically, on the methodologies and resources appropriate to Media Education programmes. I hope to give theoretical and practical insight that will encourage teachers to take the gaps that exist in their educational institutions and exercise their capacity to be resourceful and creative teachers. This exhortation is counter to the depressing mood of many teachers who see education as the process of delivering the syllabus. Anything that distracts this myopic vision or impedes the efficient programme of transmitting the syllabus is viewed with alarm. However, we need to be sympathetic to teachers as they grapple with the strong demands by authorities, students and parents to complete the syllabus and achieve good examination results. The crucial question is whether we can fulfil these syllabus demands without compromising the more basic and foundational demand for a democratic and empowering education.

In an industrialized 'management model' of education the workers (teachers) are rewarded when they function efficiently on the assembly line with the minimum number of stoppages and product rejections. If this is indeed the model for our schools, it is no wonder that teachers resist creative and productive roles, but embrace efficient technical methods of delivery and the use of textbooks which are mere expansions of the syllabus topics.

> In our work we are acutely aware of the disempowerment of teachers within the South African educational hierarchy, as the potential for critical reflection on the part of teachers struggles to emerge within a system of educational control, with its inspections, standardized syllabi, overloaded timetables and prepackaged textbooks. (Robinson & Mentor 1991)

Robinson and Mentor's Materials Development Project (MDP) suggest that clearing the logjam of transmission teaching is possible if our teaching is cooperative and rooted in grassroots interests. They describe materials produced by MDP as

> ...characterised by content which highlights the everyday experience of South African students, and by a classroom methodology based on cooperation and inquiry. (Robinson & Mentor 1991)

Teachers and the Production of Resources

The perspective of teachers-as-producers is more than a reaction to the underprovision in Black education, but rather a firm belief that teachers will only realise their educational potential when they are involved in the provision of educational resources. This means that teachers are not simply disseminators of resources but are engaged in making, modifying, selecting and mediating educational resources. This view is not unique to developing countries but is also supported by educationists in the USA with an educational market saturated with electronic media and resources in sharp contrast to South Africa.

In spite of the glut of educational resources and the sophistication of educational television and computer based education, United States educational and political institutions are united in their common concern about the state of education. Not since the Sputnik scare has America been so concerned about the quality of its education. How does it come about that the grades of resource-rich American students are falling? In 1987, a Congressional Bill, *National Geographic Awareness Week* was enacted in response to statistics which signal the problem of accelerating insularity and social illiteracy of students. These included results of surveys which show that

- 30% of University of Miami students could not locate the Pacific ocean on a world map.
- In a survey of 5 000 USA high school seniors in Texas

25% could not name the USA's southern neighbour
50% were unable to name 3 countries in Africa.
45% could not correctly shade the area representing the USA on a world map.

The congressional commissioners of the *National Commission on Excellence in Education* capture the essence of their findings in the report title, *A Nation at Risk*. They report that in spite of the sophistication of educational resources and electronic media:

> Our nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged pre-eminence in commerce, industry, science and technological innovation is being taken over by competitors throughout the world ....the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people. (Apple 1986 pp. 106)

The Public Education Information Network (USA) is a group which is striving for a democratic future. They have published a report *Education for a Democratic Future* which responds to the congressional findings *A Nation at Risk* and others. Their report advocates, as a principal element of their strategy, that to formulate a truly democratic curriculum is to develop critical literacy. This literacy extends beyond the mechanical competence of reading and writing and includes:

> the motivation and capacity to be critical of what one reads, sees, and hears; to probe and go beyond the surface appearances and question the common wisdom (Apple 1986 pp. 189)

Similar demands are made by Masterman (1988) and other media educators who believe that it is this critical character of Media Education that is its principal motivation. This demand has emerged as the key element in international Media Education developments, displacing the earlier aesthetic and inoculatory interests that still characterize many South African programmes. Both sides of the South African class divide seem locked into a narrow interest of prophylaxis from the evil media. Some programmes within the dominant and elite groups of South African education subscribe to the Postman critique of media and consequently concentrate on discriminatory skills that identify and privilege high cultural media.

Likewise mass-based and progressive organisations representative of working class and black community interests have, with very little exception, pursued media education programmes that are essentially defensive training programmes in media usage and skill development. Although the working class interests differ markedly from the dominant classes they employ a similar restricted engagement with media. In their case the discrimination seeks to identify the processes and products of dominant media. This engagement is not an analytic and investigative interest, but rather an oppositional engagement. The rationale is that these training programmes will arrest the monopoly of ruling classes who own and construct the media texts. Their vision is one of learners, teachers and workers able to produce their own (oppositional) print and electronic media and engage with state and capital media.

Ferguson and more recently the Toulouse colloquy (see Appendix II in this book) identify the special interest in production skills that need to characterize Media Education programmes in contexts of social development. He saw these production skills as essential communication tools in education as well as the pivotal component of any media education that demands a holistic understanding of media. The Toulouse Commission on Media Education and developing countries alerts us to these interests in their first resolution which points to the key role that media plays in any development programme:-

> Educational activities of grassroots and non-governmental organisations are also especially important and the Commission wishes to stress those aspects of media education which enable individuals and groups to contribute actively to endogenous cultural development.

In Ferguson's key-note address he called on educators to establish a viable Media Education initiative in this period of rapid change towards democracy. This Media Education initiative can not be exclusively theoretical or technical; it must have a balance between the two dimensions. In development contexts however the interest in media production is very high. We need to acknowledge this without an abdication of theoretical or critical interests.

> For Media Education is about participation in the development of one's society. It is about being informed through the media and about the media. It is also about giving a voice to the maximum number of people in that development. For these reasons there must be a considerable and consistent emphasis in Media Education on the *production* of media messages just as much as on the analysis and understanding of media messages. (Ferguson 1991)

For Ferguson Media Education is an extensive enterprise that goes way beyond skills training or a brief diversion to examine media but is rather:

> ...an engagement, over a long period, with all forms of media representations. It is concerned with how messages are put together, by whom and in whose interests. ....It is a subject which should be on the agenda for all teachers and students and one which does not lend itself to brief encounters. ....For, above all, Media Education is an endless enquiry into the way we make sense of the world and the way others make sense of the world for us. Above all it must be genuinely and openly critical. (1991)

The European evolution of media education towards learner empowerment in the late 1980s has realised a form that has given it maturity and stature which demands the attention of all educators. It should no longer be a peripheral interest or a subject specific topic or diversion. Masterman (1988) goes even further when he sees media education as playing a pivotal role in the development of democratic citizens.

It is now clear that successful media education involves an *empowerment* of learners essential to the creation and sustaining of an active democracy and of a public which is not easily manipulable but whose opinion *counts* on media issues because it is critically informed and capable of making its own independent judgements.

Teachers as Consumers *and* Producers of Educational Resources

It is clear from these earlier arguments that both in general education and more specifically in Media Education, educationists are realising that there are dangers in educational solutions in which the teacher is disinterested and distant from the production of educational resources. Moreover there is a growing realisation of the value of teacher-produced resources and the need to develop critical literacy within and across school subjects.

Some warning is however necessary when we read Apple, Aronowitz and Giroux, and in this book Robinson and Mentor, in relation to the relative value of teacher-produced materials. A superficial reading of their arguments may seem to imply a rejection of all external resources and methods. I believe we need to be pragmatic and flexible before we reject external (commercial) resources. I largely support the Robinson and Mentor argument that:

> ....the key issue for us is to break the dependency of teachers on material which is handed out by higher authorities (however 'progressive' the material or the authorities) and which is then used without critical reflection on the part of the teacher. We believe that it is important not to try to create material which is 'teacher-proof', because ultimately it is the teacher's understanding and use of that material which makes it educational or not. For us, therefore, the mediation of teachers in the production of new material is crucial..... (Robinson and Mentor 1991)

My reservation with the above position is that the analysis is too defensive and tends to simplify the debate of teachers and texts into a dichotomy of *teachers-as-producers* and *teachers-as-consumers*. It is based on the assumption that the educational texts produced by educational managers for consumption in the educational market are essentially faulted. This is a fair assumption as no centralised producer of educational texts can possibly understand and accommodate regional or local interests. This would be the case regardless of the educational and political views of the producer.

Instead of taking a defensive line which advances the teacher as a creative producer of educational resources and rejects external materials, I believe it is more appropriate that media teachers should be able to intelligently select the appropriate 'commercial' materials and use them critically. Robinson and Mentor do not exclude external resources completely, but rather those external resources that are used without critical reflection. This means that the text may need to be reformulated, edited or contextualised with other material to make it worthwhile for the learners needs. I would suggest therefore, that the teacher needs to be resourceful as well as creative. They must be able to create resources and to be discerning of those resources produced by others. They need to take care that they ensure that their own and external resources are relevant to the lived experience of their students.

This means that perhaps it is more appropriate to study the film *Mapantsula* rather than *Chariots of Fire*, but whether we select *Mapantsula* or any other film the methods and associated educational activities must locate the investigation in the experiences and realities of the learner. What I am trying to argue is that the most 'progressive' material can be used in a disempowering way and equally the most 'conservative' material can be used in an empowering way - so I conclude that, what teachers *make* of a resource is just as important as what it *is*.

The power of grassroots endorsement and support of texts by teachers and education bodies is the most effective device for selectively promoting well produced resources and retarding the sale of inappropriate materials. Hopefully the situation where education officials produce textbooks based on advance curriculum information will cease as teachers become discerning consumers able to exercise the full power of consumer-politics.

Some Views on the Role of Teachers in Media Education

An examination of the *UNESCO Declaration on Media Education* (1982), the recent *Toulouse Colloquy* (1990), and the *Resolutions and Conclusions of the First National Media Education Conference* (Durban, 1990) which appear in the appendices of this book, reveal a common view of the pro-active role of the teacher of Media Education and of the methods to be employed in Media Education. I have extracted those parts of the resolutions and declarations as they relate to this chapter.

UNESCO

> Develop training courses for teachers and intermediaries both to increase their own knowledge and understanding of the media and train him/her in appropriate teaching methods, which would take into account the already considerable but fragmented acquaintance with media already possessed by many students.

Toulouse

> Initiate projects which enable learning of the skill which will give access to the communication process and to means of expression by creating centres of production and training centres in Media Education.

Developing Media Education in the 1990s Conference

> The conference made it clear that any Media Education curriculum should involve teachers in its construction. In addition, teacher organisations should immediately begin working on developing relevant programmes to be used by teachers in Media Education.

Methods & Resources for School-based Media Education Programmes

The mood of South African teachers now faced with the challenge of teaching media education is generally one of concern. For most teachers this is a new field. There are very few local resources and teachers probably have not had any Media Education in their teacher training or subsequent in-service training.

According to Masterman (1988) it was the teachers limitations and the traditional approaches to Media Education which concentrated on 'discrimination' and 'appreciation' that led directly to a more investigative interest in media. Our location on the tip of Africa and our isolation in the anti-apartheid boycotts has isolated us from these international debates. Generally we are still operating in the early 'discrimination' and 'appreciation' framework.

European teachers realised for the first time in the early 1980s that they could no longer subordinate students to the dominance of the text or their views. The changes which encompassed both contents and methods gave the student a central role in the Media Education programme.

> The movement from appreciation to understanding, then, involved a transformation in the role of the pupil from being a passive recipient of already formulated textual meanings to an active maker of meanings. It heralded, too, a new agenda for media education away from narrow questions towards more 'technical' and 'scientific' ones. (Masterman 1988)

The development of critically informed intelligence in relation to the media became the key focus of Media Education rather than the earlier aesthetic or prophylactic interests.

I have attempted to include certain aspects of the Robinson and Mentor debate within a Media Education focus and to show that Media Education is a critical, active and co-operative enterprise. The argument for personal and indigenous resources and methods have also been endorsed as essential to any effective Media Education programme. While I do not support any formulaic approach to teaching, it is essential that teachers exercise rigor and discipline in preparing to teach media. The discipline will necessarily be based on local situations and guided by a few broad principles. These include a commitment to:

- the empowerment of learners who are capable of making independent analytical and creative judgements about the media;
- the engagement of the students in cooperative activity of 'making meaning' of media texts;
- an interest in popular and indigenous cultural interests in media without privilege to 'high culture' or certain media, except to focus on the most influential media in the lives of the students; and
- countering subject specific limitations of media studies to include interests across the curriculum.

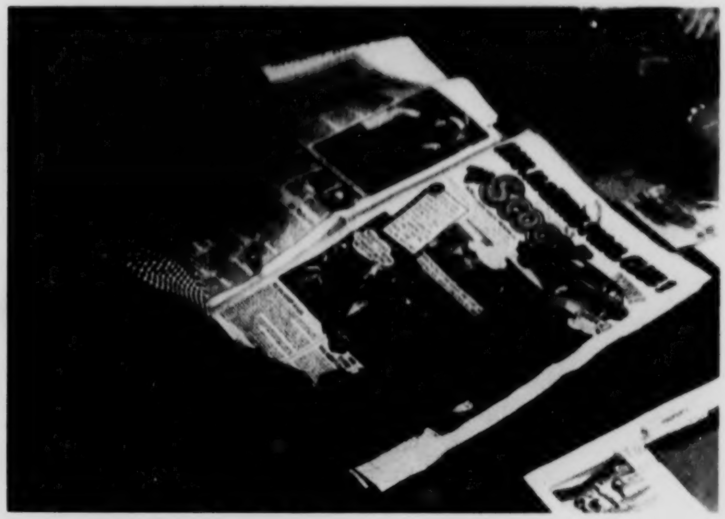
The British Film Institute (BFI) is a major influence in our Media Education Programme (based in the MRC) and specifically our approach to classroom methods and resource development. Recently, the Department of Education and Science in Britain, introduced a new English curriculum for primary and secondary education with a component on Media Education.

This new curriculum promotes a broad interest in media in six principal areas of knowledge and understanding. The BFI curriculum committee published their views in the BFI Curriculum Statement. Their view is that primary school children can explore the full range of media in each of the six areas of knowledge and understanding. According to them we can arrive at an understanding of each of these areas (and indeed ideas about developing resources to teach these areas) by asking certain key questions:-

MEDIA AGENCIES
WHO *is* communicating, *and why?*
WHO produces *the text?*

MEDIA CATEGORIES
WHAT TYPE *of text is it?*
(MEDIUM, GENRE)

MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES
HOW *is it* produced?
(TECHNOLOGY,PRODUCTION PROCESSES)



MEDIA LANGUAGES
HOW *do we know what it* means?
(MEANINGS, CODES, CONVENTIONS)

MEDIA AUDIENCES
WHO receives *it, and what sense do they make of it?*

MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS
HOW does it present *its subject?*
(relation between the text and reality)

These principles and questions can be addressed to all media and are useful in the development of a Media Education programme or materials for such a programme.

I conclude this chapter with an account of two exercises that I have developed for primary school pupils. During the planning stage of any Media Education event I ask myself whether the event, resources and methods have the potential to satisfy the six areas of knowledge and understanding. I have been encouraged to see other teachers radically modify the exercises to suit the ages, interests and experience of their students which have ranged from primary school students to adult workers.

A television advertising exercise was developed for junior primary pupils and a newspaper exercise was developed for senior primary pupils. In both cases the exercises are experiential, as they build on the past experience and resident skills of pupils and lead to critical reflection and new experiences.

Newspaper Exercise

This is an exercise in which the whole class is engaged in constructing a newspaper. The 'newspaper' is a giant version of the front page of a newspaper in which each column is approximately 500mm wide and the front page spans the entire wall of a large classroom. The large scale is important as it introduces an element of drama in the exercise as well as making every stage of production subject to public scrutiny. The exercise should be preceded with a period of preparation that will contextualize print media with other media and give some insight into the press industry. The aim of the exercise is to engage students in the process of production so that some of the 'magic' that surrounds this medium can be made obvious. Furthermore, students discover a practical value for the many language textbook exercises they have done in the past.

A large room is divided into different areas where groups can work at tables with one area slightly darkened for use as the 'darkroom'. The pupils form an editorial team, an advertising team, a photographic team and a number of journalist teams. The journalists cover stories which they write-up to fulfil editorial demands and 'publication' deadlines as the newspaper is 'published' by the end of the day.

The photographers use 'file photographs' prepared in advance. These are photographs that have been made into OHP transparencies. The transparencies are then projected onto a wall to produce the large 'photographs' to the editors specification. (Usually print sizes vary from 500mm - 1500mm in width, i.e. 1 - 3 columns). The enlargement is produced by using diazo paper which is exposed using the OHP projector and then processed in a processing unit developed by the Media Resource Centre (MRC). (This method has enormous potential in a variety of Media Education exercises as it enables a teacher and pupils to produce giant posters of any original photograph at a very low cost. The printing unit is constructed out of a plastic wastepipe, a bicycle pump and a small bottle. Media educators who wish to construct their own printing unit can contact the MRC for an information sheet.)

At the end of the day the newspaper, consisting of a number of articles together with pictures and advertisements, are pasted up to produce a giant front page of the newspaper. Although most of the stories covered have a limited investigative character, I have seen students use the paper in a very sophisticated manner. In one school where I was conducting the exercise with 40 standard four pupils (age 11 years), the pupils used the

public forum to expose exploitative practices that the usual school disciplinary mechanisms had not addressed. The case relates to the practice of high school seniors demanding sandwiches, sweets and money from the primary school pupils as they wait in the tuck-shop queue. One of the journalist teams used the public forum of the newspaper to expose the practice in a lead story entitled *Tuckshop Beggars*.

Most teachers are concerned whether their pupils will be able to survive a full day workshop or become restless and bored without the usual timetable changes. Every time I use this exercise I insist that it involves the whole class without excluding the 'problem children' and I have not been disappointed by the very high motivation of all the pupils. Although the pupils are busy writing articles, checking spelling, doing précis work, interviews and reports in an intensive day-long exercise, they see this work as a 'real' language task rather than a textbook exercise. They are engaged in making big media; they are making news.

After the exercise the pupils are asked to reflect on their experiences of the day and from these writings it is clear that this type of work is regarded not as 'schoolwork' but as an enjoyable and meaningful learning experience. To quote the pupils themselves:

> The whole day was so different from normal school and although we worked hard it was great fun.
>
> I really enjoyed myself. I never realized how much work and planning was needed to make a newspaper until we made our own.
>
> It was interesting to see how much time, effort and care go into the making of a newspaper. A newspaper is not something you can just slap together and expect someone to enjoy it, it takes a lot of preparation and you receive a lot of responsibility.
>
> I learnt that newspaper printing is a hard job. You can't always get your own way.

Teachers can then follow this exercise with a variety of media and language related assignments such as letter writing, grammar, précis work, and media interests such as audience, technology and agency.

Television Advertising Exercise

The theme of television advertising was selected to enable pupils to take some of the mystery out of the medium. By experiencing the advertising process, children gain a greater understanding of what adverts are and the purpose they serve.

Pupils are divided into small groups and are required to make a collective decision on the name of a new sandwich spread. Each pupil designs a label for the jar and once one of the product labels is chosen, the group prepares a television advertisement of their sandwich spread behind the makeshift television set. The task has proved to be suitable for children as young as six years old and it is thoroughly enjoyed. I have been surprised by the sophisticated understanding that young children have of the media. This constantly reminds me of the need to ensure that we build our methods and resources on the existing skills and experience that children have. One of the groups at a school in Hillcrest demonstrated the sophistication of a professional marketing department when they gave their product the names of *Magic Spread* and *Moz Spread*. Neither name had any explicit meaning or gave a clue about the composition of the product. When questioned about their name choice the *'Moz Spread''* group said: *'Moz doesn't mean anything, but it is easy to say and it* *sounds nice'*

The advertisements they construct tend to have a simple narrative structure and are acted out behind a television screen made from a large cardboard box. Most groups manage to fulfil the demands of producing an advertisement that incorporates all the group members in a 30 second advert. From this level of media understanding it is possible to explore other understandings and other media identified by the key questions I identified earlier.

The exercises recorded here are extremely easy to present. Teachers should not undertake such exercises as isolated forays into the media but rather as part of the overall integrated school curriculum. The *BFI key questions* that guided the formulation of these exercises should now become evaluative reference points by which we examine the limitations of the exercise and develop refinements and follow-up work.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to show that South African media educators need to take notice of the international developments of the discipline and encourage the implementation of Media Education in formal and non-formal education. The Media Education programmes that we initiate must lead to the development of resources and methods that result in the empowerment of the learner and methods that:

- take into account the interests, experience and skills of students;
- cover the full range of media with emphasis on the media most influential in the lives of students;
- pursue a deep understanding of media to encompass agency, category, technology, language, audience and representation;
- develop creative as well as critical media skills; and
- extend beyond the confines of a subject specific interest.

If Masterman, Ferguson and others are right about the pivotal role Media Education might play in the development and defense of democracy then these guidelines on developing resources for Media Education have a moral and urgent imperative. ■

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Media Education - A Contemporary Cultural Studies Perspective

Eric Louw

The study of media has become crucial in our modern world. To a very considerable extent we live in a sort of second-hand world where much of our contemporary culture is 'mediated' through the media, for example, even the most 'marginal' of South Africans — i.e. people living in the remotest of rural tribal areas — receive a great deal of their information about the world from Radio Bantu. Hence media workers have become centrally implicated in the production of today's culture through their work as agents in the process of moving ideas around. Given this importance of media within contemporary society (Masterman, 1985) it becomes vital that considerable attention be paid to the quality of both media education (i.e. the diffusion of media literacy amongst the wider public) and training (i.e. the production of media workers).

This need is given added importance in the context of a changing South Africa wherein media production and useage will form central elements in the re-structuring of our society. If we are to re-make our society there would be value in paying considerable attention to the ways in which we can use the possibilities inherent in the existing media technology as a tool of cultural reconstruction.

In looking at media education and media training Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCS) (see Hall et al, 1981) would begin by problematizing various issues related to media instruction. This paper is thus not intended to provide answers, but rather to provoke and/or stimulate debate amongst those wishing to 'teach media'. To do our job properly requires that we be constantly engaged in debate and critical assessment of ourselves in the role of media educators/trainers.

In examining all aspects of cultural production and consumption (including media and the teaching of media) CCS begins by asking two fundamental (and interrelated) questions: who benefits, and who loses? These are essentially questions of power and context, and questions of how power affects cultural meanings and practices. (Boyd-Barrett et al, 1987 and Punter 1986).

CCS would argue that a starting point is for media producers and users to be taught to be continually aware of the power relationships underpinning media messages, and thereby of the social implications of how they, and others, are relating to the media. Producing good journalists, for example, means teaching them to go beyond merely knowing how to produce a news story. A good journalist would also be aware of who benefits/who loses through using a particular style of news-gathering. This awareness would include an understanding of why they have been taught to do their job in a particular way, why newsrooms and the wider media-institutions are configured the way they are, and why certain media technology has been developed (and by whom), while other areas of research-and-development are left fallow. In a similar vein, media education can seek to make people more aware and more questioning about existing (and possible) patterns of media ownership, news selection, television programming, etc. Both media producers and users could benefit by being made more aware of how existing media-relations (including the influence of both state intervention and market forces) may be manipulating them, and may be curtailing the possibilities inherent in communication-technology. They would be made more aware of the immense potential the media holds both for improving their lives through facilitating more social interaction, and also for making information and entertainment more readily available for all. This awareness holds the potential for helping people to empower themselves as citizens. The possibilities such a media 'liberation' holds for accelerating cultural innovation and growth is enormous. Should both media workers and consumers, for example, not demand a greater say in democratically deciding media content? But surely a wide-spread literacy in 'media' is required before such demands can be rationally articulated.

So CCS would argue strongly that an understanding of context be incorporated into all media training and media education. Linked to this would be the notion of social struggle (Tomaselli, 1988). Media literacy requires that people be made aware of the struggles taking place in society, the way those involved in the struggles manipulate and/or are manipulated by the media, and how certain players in the struggle have advantages afforded them by their direct ownership of, or behind-the-scenes influence over, media institutions. A public with such knowledge (of media, context and struggle) would be equipped to be critical 'readers' of media texts and hence be less susceptible to manipulation by the media, and consequently by the interests behind the media. In fact, a successful media education programme would make the very notion of 'user' and/or 'consumer' of media somewhat redundant, because a fully media-literate public would be less dependent and more akin to active co-producers of media-messages.

Teaching future (and present) media producers and users — i.e. all of us — about the relationship between power and ideas would make for a more 'rational' use of media. CCS would argue that both media workers and consumers would benefit from media-instruction that contextualized media in these terms. The manipulative power of media (or perhaps more specifically the power of the controllers/owners of the media) would thereby be reduced. The effect should be to help human beings regain control of the media (and the social communication process), and overcome what the Frankfurt School have termed the 'culture industry' (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979). Such a 're-humanized' media has the potential for creating a social dialogue, or what Habermas calls a 'public sphere' (Habermas, 1974) wherein a truly interactive democratic cultural production would be facilitated. But the key is for people to learn about the media in its contextual setting — this knowledge will enable people to become active co-manipulators of media variables and in this way to become co-creators of culture.

The ideal then of the above approach includes the desire to empower everybody involved within social communication both media workers and media 'consumers' (or at least all those who wish to be active). CCS would consequently advocate training two separate sectors, or, to put it another way, to train all parties to the process — namely, producers and receivers (although these two categories would ideally be interchangeable within the communication process). Hence two types of instruction are required: firstly, media worker production, which requires what will be termed *Media Training*, and secondly, the creation of widespread media literacy in the broader public. This will be termed *Media Education*.

Both are equally important if full democratic use is to be made of available media technology.

Media Training: The production of media workers

South African media workers are presently generally of a low quality. This is due to two primary causes: firstly, apartheid has chased many of the best media workers out of the profession. Secondly, over the past two decades media managements (especially in the Press) have created a situation through staffing and salary policies whereby it has been difficult to attract and retain good media workers. The effect on the circulation of information in our society has been negative — South Africa's mainstream media have simply failed to deliver a comprehensive picture of our society. And because South Africa's media 'consumers' have not been provided with any media education they are seemingly unaware that they are being 'short-changed'; hence they have not demanded any better. This being the case, media managements in turn see no need to upgrade their product or their media workers.

Given South Africa's rapid social change at present, never has there been a time when an effective information flow in society has been more needed. If people are to make informed decisions about their future they need information concerning the whole spectrum of events and opinions in society in order to be able to make rational behaviourial choices. Currently the South African media are failing in this regard, as illustrated by the media's handling of the Natal violence issue. (Emdon, 1990). There is consequently a desperate need to upgrade our media workers as soon as possible in order that we can upgrade the communication process in this society. This requires training new media workers to a much higher standard than has been the case up to now. And perhaps we can also consider ways of upgrading existing media workers.

This leads to the question — what sort of media training would CCS propose?

First of all, CCS would problematize the idea of a purely technicist media training. The CCS aim would be for media training to go beyond merely producing technically competent people. However, clearly, technical competence in one's craft is the foundation of being a practicing media worker. Hence it would be recognized that basic technique and practical skills are a core component of media training. But training in 'technique' can seek to go further and stretch the understanding of 'technique' so as to incorporate an understanding of the technological possibilities inherent within any medium for its use for improving democratic discourse, or empowering people.

So there is the insistence on non-technicist media training (but without abandoning a technical component to the training). However, a emphasis needs to be placed on the need for critical media people. This means media workers who understand:

- the full range of media theories;
- their social context (and its mutability);
- the meshing of existing media institutions into the power relationships in society;
- possible alternative configuarations of media organization/media technology; and
- the relationship between existing media technology and research-development-funding.

This requires an education in critical theory, where the connectedness of theory and practice is emphasised.

In this regard, Len Masterman (1985) has proposed a number of theoretical areas with which media trainers should be conversant, including ideology, rhetoric and audience. CCS would regard the incorporation of Masterman's ideas into a syllabus for the production of media trainers as valuable.

But, in contrast to this and as a second concern, although CCS would propose that media training aim to produce critical, thinking media people, not technicists, it is equally important to recognise that it is also not enough to produce pure media (or communication) theorists. Media/communication theorizing can too easily become an ivory tower theoreticism and/or an intellectualism outside of a real organic concern with the social context that media workers have to work within.

Thirdly, CCS would propose that media trainees be placed into a direct working relationship with community groups as a practical extension of the above training (Tomaselli & Tomaselli, 1988). In other words, in designing media syllabi, it could be argued that the training institutions (and thereby the trainees) seek ways to form an 'organic relationship' with the energies of the social struggles taking place around them in society. That requires learning to consult with community groups in a form which does not grant the media 'experts' a socially superior position by virtue of their knowledge. It means learning practical grassroots democracy. This process might go a long way towards overcoming the arrogance which media workers often display towards those they come into contact with.

Such direct interaction is also an excellent way for teaching media workers to distinguish which interest group wants what and why. It becomes a way of teaching media workers to understand their relationship to different interest groups in society. This approach helps trainees to learn to recognize the link between ideas and the real world: for example, a media worker reporting this conference should be trained to recognize how the ideas expressed in such a forum could get picked up by certain vested interest groups and used by them to serve their own narrow interests, often for reasons unrelated to the original intention of the formulator of the ideas. (In fact, the media workers and educators here might well ask themselves whose interests would be served if, for example, ideas expressed at this conference were implemented).

Fourthly, CCS would argue that people teaching media skills should build an understanding of 'power' and 'struggle' into their syllabi from the very outset. In this way it would be less likely that their products become co-opted in unintended ways, i.e.the teachers would thereby produce media workers that are less likely to be unintentionally co-opted.

As a fifth point, media trainers need to recognise the value of taking care when using media training methods imported from overseas. There is currently a tendency to rely on methodologies and texts from Europe and North America especially. People teaching media might first consider the extent to which training methods from the first world perhaps carry with them the ideological baggage of a highly developed technicist society. If they deem that this is the case, would using such a method not fail to equip future media workers with knowledge appropriate for the South African context, which has social problems very different to those of Europe or America? In fact, does the use of first world media-training methodologies not represent just another form of cultural colonialism?

Media Education: The production of a media literate population

Existing media technology already holds the potential for the creation of a mass social dialogue — i.e. a mass democracy in which all citizens actively participate. (Enzensberger, 1974). If this full potential is to be realized CCS would argue that a programme of mass Media Education is called for.

For mass democracy to operate all citizens would ideally be active participants in a multi-directional social discourse. At very least, all citizens who want to be active should be in a position to be active participants in the social discourse. The electronic media offer the framework for such a mass discourse. But to create such a discourse a basic media literacy is first required. All citizens need to

- understand the media;
- understand its possibilities and limitations;
- have access to the media;
- be able to critically 'read' media messages; and
- be in a position to make an input into the media system. Within such a system media workers would become the facilitators of a social dialogue, rather than the 'experts' with sole access to the production of media messages.

If a starting point is required in such a mass media-literacy programme the logical place would seem to be to educate people in 'how to read' a media text critically — i.e. to 'see through' the appearance of 'self-explanatoriness'. Media literacy requires a recognition that there is no such thing as a media message that is a self-explanatory reflection of reality. All media messages are 'constructs' and carry with them the hidden ideological baggage of both their creator and of the creator's context.

Creating critical receivers of media messages would be a useful, but presumably only a first step. What is important is the recognition that producing critical message-receivers is not necessarily sufficient because reception (even critical reception) still implies a second-class status, and/or a de facto acceptance of the superior position of the message-producers. If a democratic (interactive) communication system is to be constructed, then ultimately everybody (who wants to be active) has to be given the opportunity to be a producer (or at least a potential producer) of media messages. Care must be taken not to dismiss this as a necessarily utopian idea. The technologies do exist for society to solve the impediments in the way of creating a fully democratic (dialogical) communication system. It is now a question of getting policy makers to allocate the necessary resources to solve the problems and to create the necessary communication infrastructures so as to realize the latent possibilities. And one way to nudge society into creating such a network and/or solving any impedements is to create a media literate population who know what exciting social possibilities await them in such a re-ordered media-world.

But because creating a fully-interactive media network will presumably take a long time and a lot of resources, a start has to be made somewhere. In the intervening period — and in preparation for making all people interactive media users — the public could be taught to be critical receivers of media messages. In fact, because of the growing impact of media on the 'second hand' world people now 'live' in, it may well be that in our contemporary world it is far more important to teach high school pupils and undergraduates how to critically read an everyday media text rather than how to critically read Shakespeare. Critical users of the media would greatly enhance the possibility for a democratic society. It could even be suggested that an electronic media literacy is becoming more important than printed-text literacy. The point is, once one has learnt to be a critical media receiver, one by definition 'understands media' (and how it is produced, and its possibilities). Thereafter, the transition to becoming an active co-producer of media messages is not such a masssive jump.

So how does one produce a media literate population? CCS would propose courses, at both secondary and tertiary education level, in the areas discussed hereafter.

How the media works

This section would entail sketching out the main structures of the main media and how they work; who owns/controls them; and a short history of their development. Further, a sociology of the media would be valuable.

Incorporated in this section could be explanations of the dominant techniques of encoding (what is included and omitted through 'newsworthiness' and programming), an examination of who the media consider important enough to include (and why), and an examination of the main 'yay' and 'boo' words used on the media. (Hartley, 1982).

This section would thus attempt to describe the media and explain how and why this media excludes ideas not acceptable to the dominant discourse — i.e. the dominant discourse is that which is 'acceptable' to those who own/control the media (which in South Africa is monopoly mining-finance capital and the National Party). The question would also need to be examined of whether this is a conspiracy of sorts.

If it is not a conspiracy then other alternative explanations of how control works would need to be examined, for example, the influence of market forces on media content, the concentration of ownership, the power of advertisers, media investment decisions, barriers to entry to the media market, and the way media distribution operates. CCS would argue that all of these 'hidden forces' influence what is encoded and distributed and that critical media users need to be aware of these forces. A useful means of creating an awareness of these hidden forces is to teach a political economy of the media.

Similarly, the interconnectedness between the media and power relationships in society should be studied. In this regard Gramsci's (1971) notion of 'hegemony' as the way dominant groups rule firstly by generation of legitimacy, secondly by the use of coercion, and thirdly by politicking and alliance-formation, is especially useful.

The above would form the basic introductory 'background information' required for media literacy.

Media Technology

The existing technology arose out of specific contexts, and specific decisions about what to research, what to develop and how to apply discoveries. These sorts of decisions impact upon our media environment and ultimately upon the second-hand (media) world we live in. It is significant to note how many of these decisions have had their origins within military infrastructures. And because the military are characterised by a top-down 'command'-structure understanding of human organisation, it stands to reason that media-technology (and applications) originating in these environments are more likely to have a top-down (or one-directional/command) bias.

Questions can be asked about the suitability of such media-applications for a democratic communication network, and furthermore, the possibilities for creating a liberatory useage of the media already developed in terms of one-directional/command logic.

Critical media users require an understanding of media technology, its ontology, its limitations, and its possibilities. This should create a dynamic for speeding up technological innovation, both at the level of development and application.

The Audience

Because of the preponderance of 'administrative research' (Smythe & Van Dinh, 1983) within communicology, the importance of the audience and 'receiver' has generally been undervalued. Instead of a concern with enhancing the power of the audience/receiver (i.e. a democratic concern), administrative research has taken the perspective of the communicator (as an initiator), and has been primarily concerned with finding ways of enhancing the power of the communicator. The latter is an inherently undemocratic approach to communication/media.

Because CCS regards the audience as the active co-creators of meaning, a concern with the 'receivers' is greatly enhanced. A good starting point for teaching a 'respect' for the audience is to problematize administrative research, and thereafter to move onto a study of reception theory. But at the same time it is also important to consider the extent to which audiences can be manipulated, as well as how a knowledge of reception theory and the audience may enhance the power of cynical media manipulators. In this regard it is useful to ask the question — why are some media programmes popular and what role does the pleasure-principle play in this?

When teaching 'audience', the notion of 'ideology' (Larrain, 1982) can be very useful, especially where this concept deals with how and why the media can be used by certain vested interests to manipulate the audience by disguising social relationships so as to serve their own purposes. The concept of ideology can be especially helpful when drawing out the relationship between ideas and context (i.e. social struggle and power relationships). This is valuable for the production of critical media users.

The study of sign systems

The structuralist study of signs, codes and culture — or semiology (Hawkes, 1977) — offers a route to expose media users to the notion of meaning production at its heart: i.e. meaning is traced down to the smallest unit possible — the sign — and the way in which signs are made and strung together. Semiotics/structuralism is an excellent adjunct to critical theory, and hence is is not surprising to find that this method forms a central component to CCS programmes.

Semiotics has the advantage of inherently problematizing the notion of 'reality'. The structuralist method relativizes meaning and thereby helps to generate critical media users. However, this can all too easily lead to a post-structural de-constructionism. Hence when exposing students to structuralism/semiotics it is useful to also explain the epistemological roots of post-structuralism in structuralism. Post-structuralism is itself constructed upon a sign system. Hence students can be shown that although the notion of 'reality' is problematic, so too the post-structuralist notion that reality does not exist can also be problematized. This only serves to reinforce the production of critical media users.

A sub-field of structuralism is the teaching of 'narrative structure'. The teaching of narrative is becoming especially important as television assumes such a central place within our contemporary social milieu. Television narratives (stories and 'plots') — including the overall narrative (i.e. the sequencing of items and programmes) — are increasingly playing a role in the construction of our second-hand 'reality' as derived from the media. To be able to read this narrativity is part of the process of becoming critical media users.

A way forward?

If South Africa is to realize its full potential in the modern context, we will need a massive improvement of our education system. But care should be taken that we do not necessarily fixate ouselves upon merely creating a print-literate population.

Book-literacy is important - but so too is literacy in the other forms of media, especially the electronic media, for example, television, film, video, and computers. To be players in the modern world South Africans will need to be fully integrated into the global electronic grid of information, but not integrated merely as passive uncritical 'takers' from a neo-colonial system. Rather we need a fully media-literate population in order to be both critical users of such a global system and to be active contributors to such a system.

What is more, the exciting challenge of creating a population that is literate in the full range of media, is to thereby open up the possibilities for South Africans, not only of benefiting from the latest socio-technological developments that would be derivative from such 'literacy', but also of potentially enhancing democracy in our society by creatively using the electronic media.

Those restructuring our secondary and tertiary education programmes during the post-apartheid reconstruction period would be foolhardy indeed if they failed to give serious consideration to the role of media education and training in the overall rebuilding of our now shattered education system. ■

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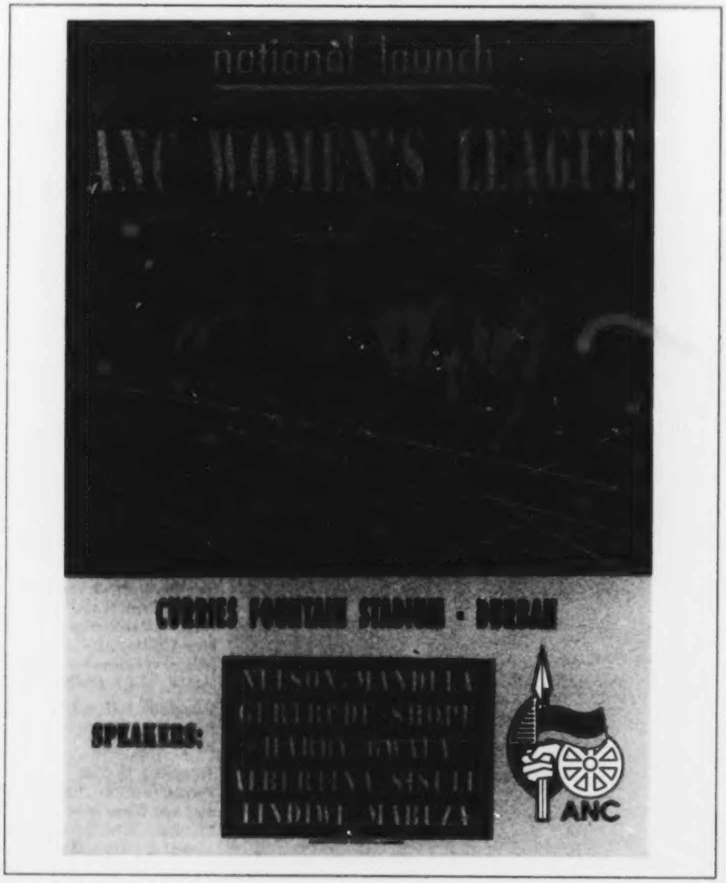
Teaching Media Awareness to Anti-Apartheid Groups

Ann McKay

The Durban Media Trainers' Group is a collective of people representing local media organisations who are committed to improving media skills training in Durban. The DMTG was constituted in 1989 with the aim of improving the skills of anti-apartheid media workers. The DMTG's main client groups have been progressive community and service organisations, trade unions, church groups and youth congresses.



The Durban Media Trainers' Group has defined media awareness as referring to both

- awareness of the media available, and
- awareness of the target audience.

This awareness is essential if media is to be effective.

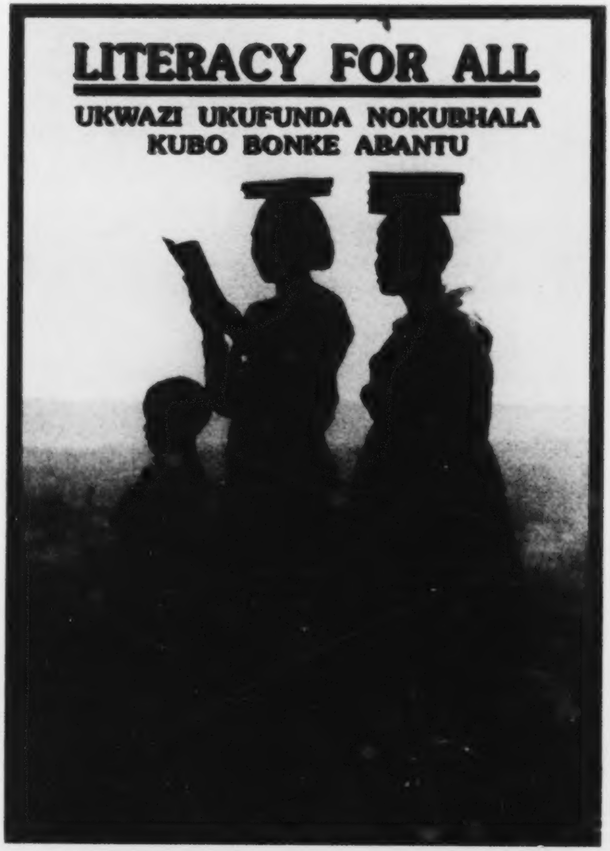
As media trainers serving the progressive community the DMTG faced the problem of being asked to teach people specific media skills which the trainers could see were often not going to be used effectively. This happened because many progressive organisations were producing media without giving strategic thought as to who it was aimed at and how best to target an audience. Thus posters and pamphlets were being prepared which were filled with slogans and rhetoric which would appeal to members of the organisation, but would not necessarily convince people outside of it. Another factor was the limited choice of medium; while posters, pamphlets, banners, badges and t-shirts were popular, little attempt was made to access either the commercial and state media, and other forms of media particularly suitable for a low-literacy constituency such as audio cassettes and videos were not being used.

This had a lot to do with the State of Emergency. With the government's attempts to crush left-wing organisation, a leftist organisational style developed where there was no visible structure, and people operated in a clandestine way. Because the production of media was a key component in progressive organisations' ability to mobilise the community to action, media centres were special targets of state attack, with several of these being fire-bombed or broken up particularly in Johannesburg. It is still a matter of debate as to whether it was actually necessary for activists to act as secretively as they did, but the objective conditions of the repression they were working under did affect the style of organisation. Under these conditions media that could be produced quickly, that did not rely on expensive equipment, and that could be controlled by the organisation producing it became necessary. There was also only limited possibilities for using the state and commercial media. In the 1980s the SABC was openly anti-progressive organizations, and UDF and Cosatu affiliates consequently refused to talk to the SABC because of the way that information was distorted. The commercial press were also negative towards progressive organizations. In Natal particularly, the Natal Newspapers' pro-Buthelezi agenda blocked any meaningful participation in the Natal commercial press.

This is not to say that organisations could not have made more use of commercial media and could have chosen to produce more effective media. However, progressives felt threatened by excessive repression which tended to persuade them to stick to what was safe and controllable.

From 1989 onwards, however, it became clear that media had to be used more effectively to promote the views of the Mass Democratic Movement. This meant that at grassroots level more practical skills in media production were required and, at a leadership level, publicity and public relations became increasingly important.

Where the Durban Media Trainers' Group came in was in highlighting the necessity for



media to be strategised rather than produced at the last minute in a haphazard way. As people who were training and producing media for political and service groups, we could see that many organisations had the following bad habits which made their media ineffective.

- Media was being produced at the last minute, almost as an afterthought in planning campaigns. The UDF anti-elections media (see example opposite) was an exception to this trend, and the effectiveness of their campaign was a highlight of organisation in Natal.
- Media was being delegated to one or two members in an organisation; thus the organisation as a whole was not taking responsibility for strategising the media and analysing the target audience in order to pitch the media most effectively. The media groups were generally cut off from the decision-making process, and therefore could also not influence campaigns in terms of making them media effective.
- In some organisations media was given to overworked activists, and they were not coping with production on top of their other campaign work (and usually also full-time jobs).
- The commercial media was almost completely ignored. Journalists would battle to find organisational representatives for comment, and would then be told that they could not be quoted before they had committee approval; this usually meant that the news missed its deadlines. Organisations' leaders were often in hiding, and could not be contacted. Press releases were frequently written in inappropriately militant or rhetorical language. Most seriously there is a wide (and understandable) attitude that the commercial press and state media are part of 'the enemy'. In Natal it has been observed that the business interests of Natal Newspapers are bound up with the success of the KwaZulu-Natal Indaba, and therefore with Inkatha (this has lead to a reporting bias so serious that at one point last year the Star sent down its own team of reporters, being unable to rely on the accuracy of copy from the *Daily News* or *Natal Mercury*). This resulted in an antagonistic attitude between progressive organisations and journalists which lead to these organisations getting far less coverage than they could have. At no time has any progressive organisation in Durban had an effective mandated fulltime publicity person to handle public relations.
- Most organisations have limited funds available for media production - which makes the use of commercial press and radio, and the production of cheap effective media very important.

DMTG tried to address these problems in four ways.

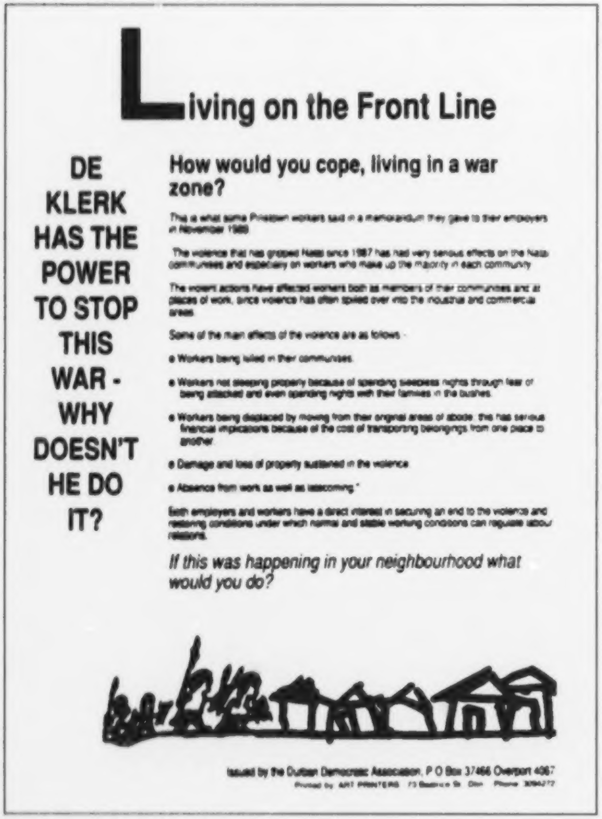
1. Introduction of MEDIA ANALYSIS into Technical Skill Workshop

This often takes the form of asking trainees to analyse their own responses to media in our workshops. An example taken from a poster making workshop is to put up a range of posters of different sizes and colours produced on a wide range of technology and then asking all the trainees to choose which poster seems the best to them and which seems the worst - and to give reasons why they respond to those posters in that way. The subsequent discussion brings out principles of poster design and production which comes from the trainees' own responses to media. It also provides them with a stimulus to their own creativity.

In a pamphlet making workshop we might ask trainees to look at two pamphlets on the same issue produced for different audiences. (See examples below). The discussion questions would be as follows:

- Who do you think these pamphlets are aimed at?
- How does the language tell you this?
- How does the choice of pictures and the layout tell you this?
- In what way are their arguments different?
- Do you think these pamphlets are effective?
- Would they be effective if distributed in a different community?

This exercise has worked very well with tertiary level groups; but is more difficult to carry off with secondary school level trainees. Nevertheless it does yield useful discussion of media in relation to specific audiences, especially as we take pains to stress that media is never good or bad - it is just effective or not effective for different audiences.



Living on the Front Line

DE KLERK HAS THE POWER TO STOP THIS WAR - WHY DOESN'T HE DO IT?

How would you cope, living in a war zone?

This is what some Pinetown workers said in a memorandum they gave to their employers in November 1989

"The violence that has gripped Natal since 1987 has had very serious effects on the Natal communities and especially on workers who make up the majority in each community.

The violent actions have affected workers both as members of their communities and at places of work, since violence has often spilled over into the industrial and commercial areas.

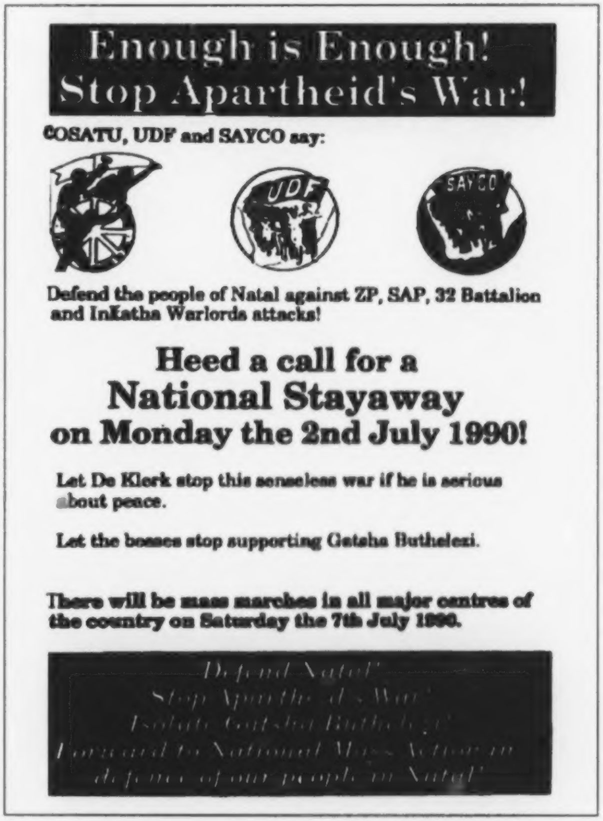
Some of the main effects of the violence are as follows :-

- Workers being killed in their communities.
- Workers not sleeping properly because of spending sleepless nights through fear of being attacked and even spending nights with their families in the bushes.
- Workers being displaced by moving from their original areas of abode: this has serious financial implications because of the cost of transporting belongings from one place to another.
- Damage and loss of property sustained in the violence.
- Absence from work as well as latecoming."

Both employers and workers have a direct interest in securing an end to the violence and restoring conditions under which normal and stable working conditions can regulate labour relations.

If this was happening in your neighbourhood what would you do?

Issued by the Durban Democratic Association, P O Box 37466 Overport 4067
Printed by ART PRINTERS 73 Beatrice St Dbn Phone 3094272



Enough is Enough!
Stop Apartheid's War!

COSATU, UDF and SAYCO say:

Defend the people of Natal against ZP, SAP, 32 Battalion and Inkatha Warlords attacks!

Heed a call for a
National Stayaway
on Monday the 2nd July 1990!

Let De Klerk stop this senseless war if he is serious about peace.

Let the bosses stop supporting Gatsha Buthelezi.

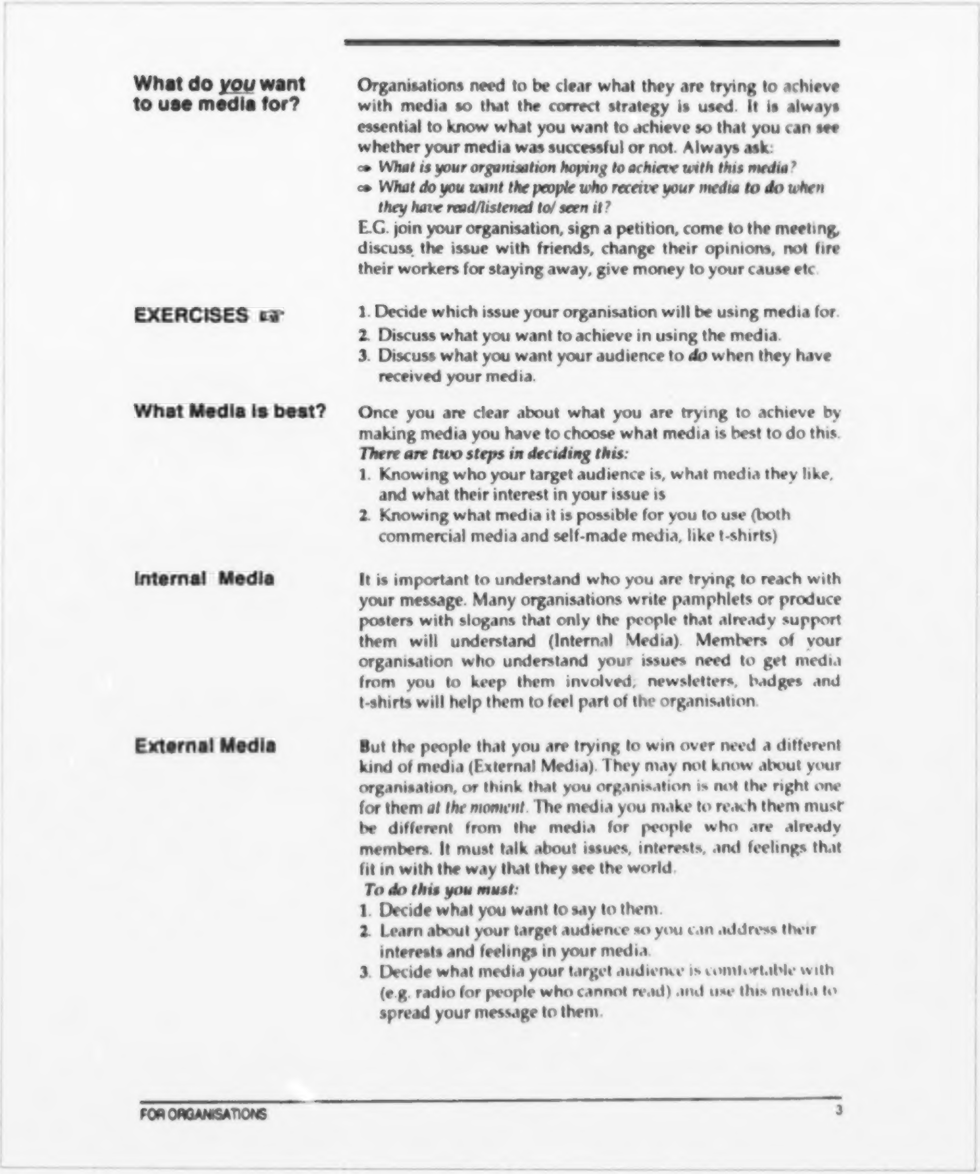
There will be mass marches in all major centres of the country on Saturday the 7th July 1990.

Defend Natal!
Stop Apartheid's War!
Isolate Gatsha Buthelezi!
Forward to National Mass Action in
defence of our people in Natal!

2. Stress on AUDIENCE ANALYSIS as the Cornerstone of all Media Work

Internal and External Media.

Media is only as effective as it relates to the audience it is aimed at.



What do *you* want to use media for?

Organisations need to be clear what they are trying to achieve with media so that the correct strategy is used. It is always essential to know what you want to achieve so that you can see whether your media was successful or not. Always ask:

- *What is your organisation hoping to achieve with this media?*
- *What do you want the people who receive your media to do when they have read/listened to/ seen it?*

E.G. join your organisation, sign a petition, come to the meeting, discuss the issue with friends, change their opinions, not fire their workers for staying away, give money to your cause etc.

EXERCISES ☞

1. Decide which issue your organisation will be using media for.
2. Discuss what you want to achieve in using the media.
3. Discuss what you want your audience to ***do*** when they have received your media.

What Media is best?

Once you are clear about what you are trying to achieve by making media you have to choose what media is best to do this.

There are two steps in deciding this:

1. Knowing who your target audience is, what media they like, and what their interest in your issue is
2. Knowing what media it is possible for you to use (both commercial media and self-made media, like t-shirts)

Internal Media

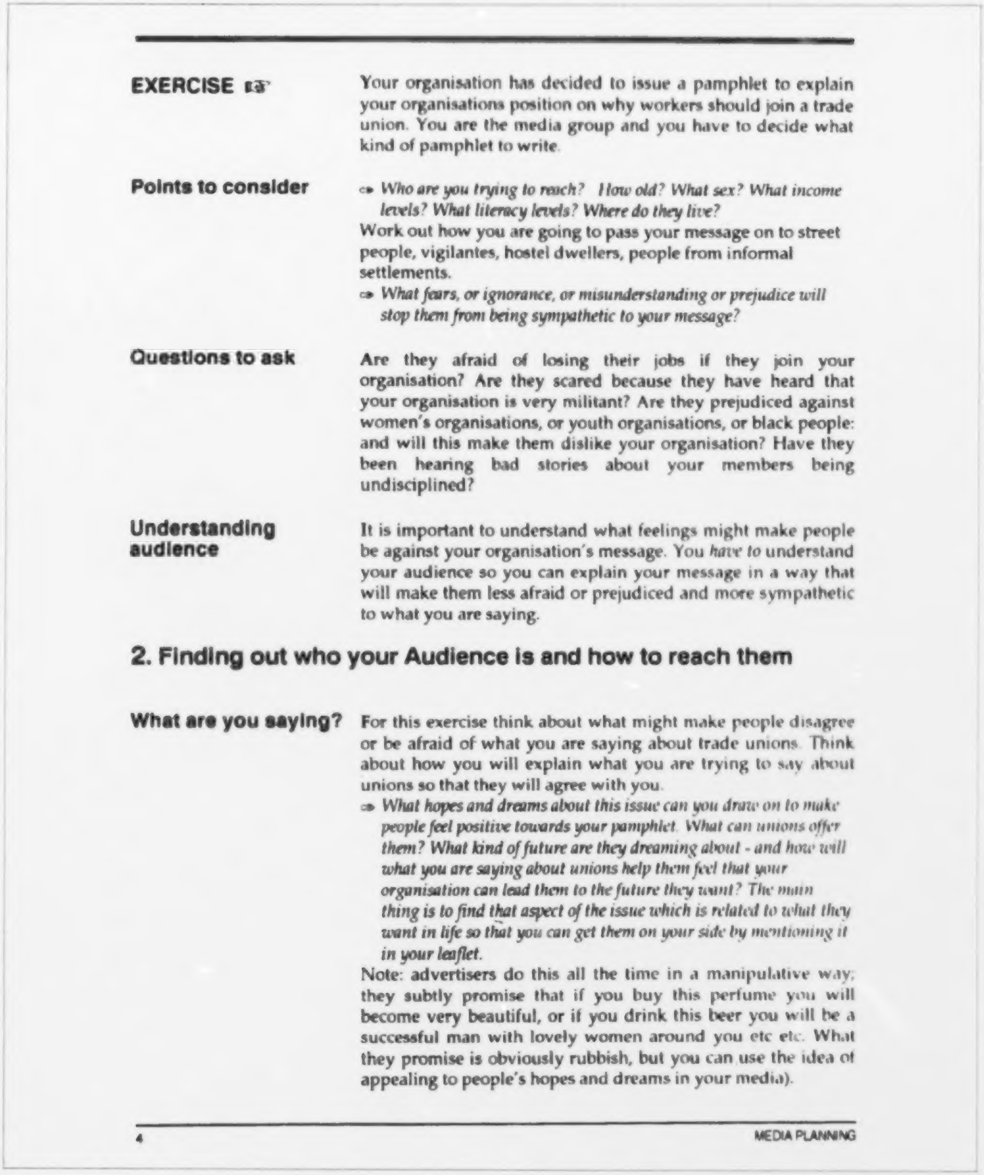
It is important to understand who you are trying to reach with your message. Many organisations write pamphlets or produce posters with slogans that only the people that already support them will understand (Internal Media). Members of your organisation who understand your issues need to get media from you to keep them involved; newsletters, badges and t-shirts will help them to feel part of the organisation.

External Media

But the people that you are trying to win over need a different kind of media (External Media). They may not know about your organisation, or think that you organisation is not the right one for them *at the moment*. The media you make to reach them must be different from the media for people who are already members. It must talk about issues, interests, and feelings that fit in with the way that they see the world.

To do this you must:

1. Decide what you want to say to them.
2. Learn about your target audience so you can address their interests and feelings in your media.
3. Decide what media your target audience is comfortable with (e.g. radio for people who cannot read) and use this media to spread your message to them.



EXERCISE ☞

Your organisation has decided to issue a pamphlet to explain your organisations position on why workers should join a trade union. You are the media group and you have to decide what kind of pamphlet to write.

Points to consider

- *Who are you trying to reach? How old? What sex? What income levels? What literacy levels? Where do they live?*

Work out how you are going to pass your message on to street people, vigilantes, hostel dwellers, people from informal settlements.

- *What fears, or ignorance, or misunderstanding or prejudice will stop them from being sympathetic to your message?*

Questions to ask

Are they afraid of losing their jobs if they join your organisation? Are they scared because they have heard that your organisation is very militant? Are they prejudiced against women's organisations, or youth organisations, or black people: and will this make them dislike your organisation? Have they been hearing bad stories about your members being undisciplined?

Understanding audience

It is important to understand what feelings might make people be against your organisation's message. You *have to* understand your audience so you can explain your message in a way that will make them less afraid or prejudiced and more sympathetic to what you are saying.

2. Finding out who your Audience is and how to reach them

What are you saying?

For this exercise think about what might make people disagree or be afraid of what you are saying about trade unions. Think about how you will explain what you are trying to say about unions so that they will agree with you.

- *What hopes and dreams about this issue can you draw on to make people feel positive towards your pamphlet. What can unions offer them? What kind of future are they dreaming about - and how will what you are saying about unions help them feel that your organisation can lead them to the future they want? The main thing is to find that aspect of the issue which is related to what they want in life so that you can get them on your side by mentioning it in your leaflet.*

Note: advertisers do this all the time in a manipulative way; they subtly promise that if you buy this perfume you will become very beautiful, or if you drink this beer you will be a successful man with lovely women around you etc etc. What they promise is obviously rubbish, but you can use the idea of appealing to people's hopes and dreams in your media).

EXERCISE ☞

For this exercise find out what hopes and dreams your target audience has which are related to your pamphlet on negotiations.

➾ *What do your target audience already know about the issue? This is important to find out because you don't want to repeat what they already understand.* ***but it is very important*** *not to assume that they know as much as you do; very often people outside of your organisation do not have the same interest in issues that you do and they will not understand concepts such as privatisation, negotiations, worker's charter and so on. It is important to explain exactly what you are talking about so that they don't feel left out. It is also important to explain what organisations are: not everyone in the community knows what the letters CWIU, COSATU, IDASA, OASSSA mean.*

Understand the issue

For this pamphlet on unions find out what your target audience needs to know in order to understand the issue - and then make sure that you include this information in the pamphlet. EVEN IF it takes you three days to find out this information, it will be worth it. A pamphlet full of organisational slogans will not impress or educate people who are not yet sympathetic to you.

NEXT ☞

Plan a pamphlet on unions which will:

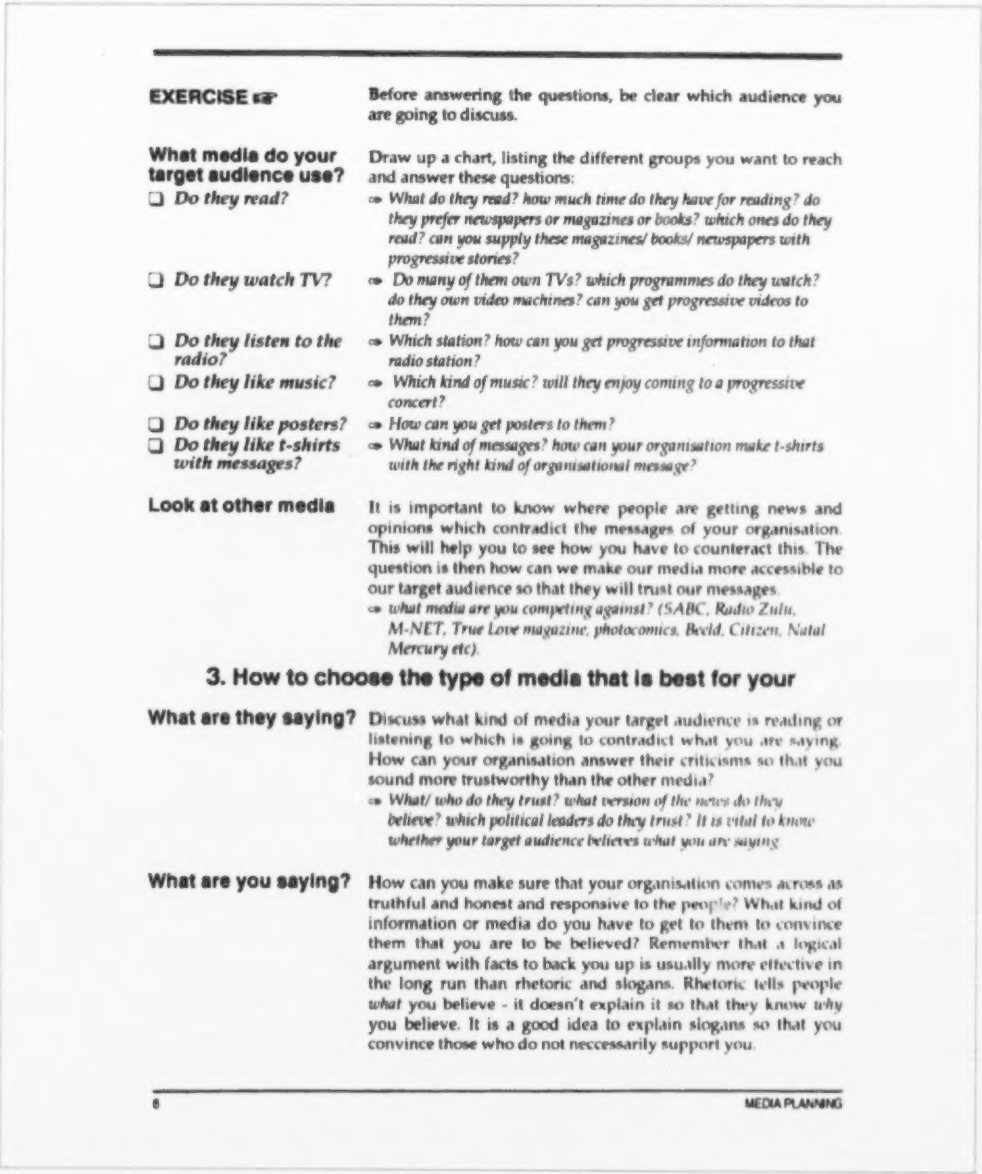
1. Be interesting to your target audience.
2. Overcome any fears they might have.
3. Be related to their hopes and dreams.
4. Give them all the information they need to know to understand the issue.

Many types of media

Of course pamphlets are not the only kind of media. T-shirts, radio, TV, newsletters and other kinds of media might be better for carrying your message. When you choose what kind of media to use, you need to find out what kind of media your audience is comfortable with. Below are some questions which can help you do this.

Analysis of Media

Of course pamphlets are not the only kind of media. T-shirts, radio, TV, newsletters and other kinds of media might be better for carrying your message. When you choose what kind of media to use, you need to find out what kind of media your audience is comfortable with. Opposite are some questions which can help you do this.



EXERCISE ☞	Before answering the questions, be clear which audience you are going to discuss.
What media do your target audience use?	Draw up a chart, listing the different groups you want to reach and answer these questions:
☐ ***Do they read?***	➾ *What do they read? how much time do they have for reading? do they prefer newspapers or magazines or books? which ones do they read? can you supply these magazines/ books/ newspapers with progressive stories?*
☐ ***Do they watch TV?***	➾ *Do many of them own TVs? which programmes do they watch? do they own video machines? can you get progressive videos to them?*
☐ ***Do they listen to the radio?***	➾ *Which station? how can you get progressive information to that radio station?*
☐ ***Do they like music?***	➾ *Which kind of music? will they enjoy coming to a progressive concert?*
☐ ***Do they like posters?***	➾ *How can you get posters to them?*
☐ ***Do they like t-shirts with messages?***	➾ *What kind of messages? how can your organisation make t-shirts with the right kind of organisational message?*
Look at other media	It is important to know where people are getting news and opinions which contradict the messages of your organisation. This will help you to see how you have to counteract this. The question is then how can we make our media more accessible to our target audience so that they will trust our messages. ➾ *what media are you competing against? (SABC, Radio Zulu, M-NET, True Love magazine, photocomics, Beeld, Citizen, Natal Mercury etc).*

3. How to choose the type of media that is best for your

What are they saying?	Discuss what kind of media your target audience is reading or listening to which is going to contradict what you are saying. How can your organisation answer their criticisms so that you sound more trustworthy than the other media? ➾ *What/ who do they trust? what version of the news do they believe? which political leaders do they trust? It is vital to know whether your target audience believes what you are saying*
What are you saying?	How can you make sure that your organisation comes across as truthful and honest and responsive to the people? What kind of information or media do you have to get to them to convince them that you are to be believed? Remember that a logical argument with facts to back you up is usually more effective in the long run than rhetoric and slogans. Rhetoric tells people *what* you believe - it doesn't explain it so that they know *why* you believe. It is a good idea to explain slogans so that you convince those who do not neccessarily support you.

6 MEDIA PLANNING

Remember

It is important that your media (*radio interviews, pamphlets* or other media) is written in language that your target audience understands.

- ⇨ *What level of language is best for your audience (simple or very intellectual)?*
- ⇨ *Zulu or English?*
- ⇨ *What tone (friendly, militant, informative, formal, arrogant, technical, marxist, simple) will work best with them?*
- ⇨ *How are you going to train yourself to write/speak in the appropriate style?*

EXERCISE ☞

Look at different pamphlets (from a wide range of organisations).

DISCUSSION:

- Which pamphlet would work best for your target audience? why is this pamphlet better than other examples?
- Which pamphlet would be the worst for your target audience? which group would it be good for?
- Rewrite of the example pamphlets to appeal to:
  - ⇨ *student constituency*
  - ⇨ *middle class black constituency*
  - ⇨ *white middle ground*

This exercise is good for trying out the different ways of writing for different target audiences.

4. What media are you going to use?

Some decisions need to be made in every media campaign:

- ⇨ *What media will be most useful for reaching our audience? Radio Zulu, Bona magazine, Sunday Tribune, t-shirts, posters, newsletters etc...*
  (look at the section on commercial media)
- ⇨ *How much will it cost? can we afford that? are there cheaper alternatives? cost versus number of people reached...*
- ⇨ *Will we produce it ourselves? can we get access to the necessary equipment? is there an easier way of doing it? can we get someone else to do it?*
- ⇨ *What skilled people do we need? do we need training? where can we get it?*
- ⇨ *Where do we go to get the resources?*
- ⇨ *Who is going to distribute it?*

Encouragement to Consider Commercial and State Press

Our approach in these workshops is to ask groups to analyse the media. e.g.

II. MEDIA OPTIONS FOR YOUR ORGANISATION

A. Commercial media

Why use the commercial print media?

It is important for organisations to recognise the importance of using the commercial print media. These media have an enormous distribution. They form the quickest and most cost-effective way of reaching large numbers of people (see distribution figures: a press release in the Sunday Times reaches half a million people, Radio Zulu reaches 3.4 million). The alternative media have nowhere near the same impact in terms of people reached. If your organisation can get its message out on the commercial media, you can reach thousands of people at no cost to you.

1. How commercial media operate

It is important to know who owns the commercial media. Newspapers and magazines are owned by big business, and the radio and TV are mostly owned by the government. They are powerful means of communicating to a wide audience, and the people who own them have their own agenda - which is often different from yours. And often they will distort information about organisations they don't agree with, or most often, they will ignore it. But if you understand how they operate, and work to produce news that they think will interest their audience you can still get your message across. To do this properly it is necessary to understand how the commercial media work and what they think is news.

2.Analysis of commercial media

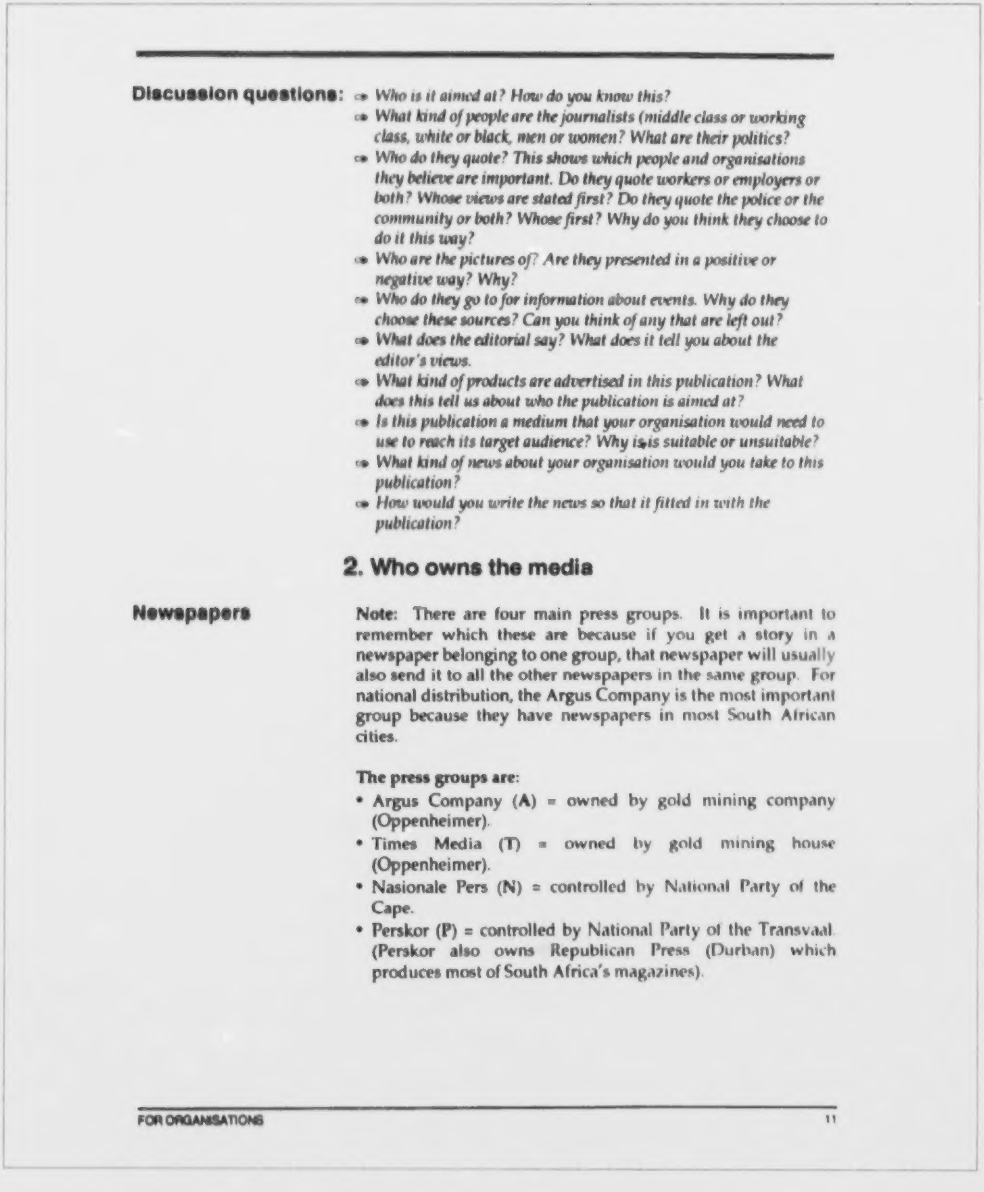
EXERCISE ☞

The purpose of this exercise is to analyse commercial media to find out what they think is news, and to find out what their view of the world is.

Break people up into groups, each group with a particular medium:

- ➩ *Fair Lady, Cosmopolitan, Tribute*
- ➩ *Beeld, Vaderland*
- ➩ *Star, Argus, Daily News, Mercury*
- ➩ *Sunday Times, Times Herald*
- ➩ *Idasa news*
- ➩ *Work in Progress, Labour Bulletin*
- ➩ *New African, Umafrika, New Nation*
- ➩ *Weekly Mail (old and new)*
- ➩ *Financial Mail*

(videos of TV news broadcasts or radio programmes can also be analysed if the equipment is available)



Discussion questions:

- *Who is it aimed at? How do you know this?*
- *What kind of people are the journalists (middle class or working class, white or black, men or women? What are their politics?*
- *Who do they quote? This shows which people and organisations they believe are important. Do they quote workers or employers or both? Whose views are stated first? Do they quote the police or the community or both? Whose first? Why do you think they choose to do it this way?*
- *Who are the pictures of? Are they presented in a positive or negative way? Why?*
- *Who do they go to for information about events. Why do they choose these sources? Can you think of any that are left out?*
- *What does the editorial say? What does it tell you about the editor's views.*
- *What kind of products are advertised in this publication? What does this tell us about who the publication is aimed at?*
- *Is this publication a medium that your organisation would need to use to reach its target audience? Why is is suitable or unsuitable?*
- *What kind of news about your organisation would you take to this publication?*
- *How would you write the news so that it fitted in with the publication?*

2. Who owns the media

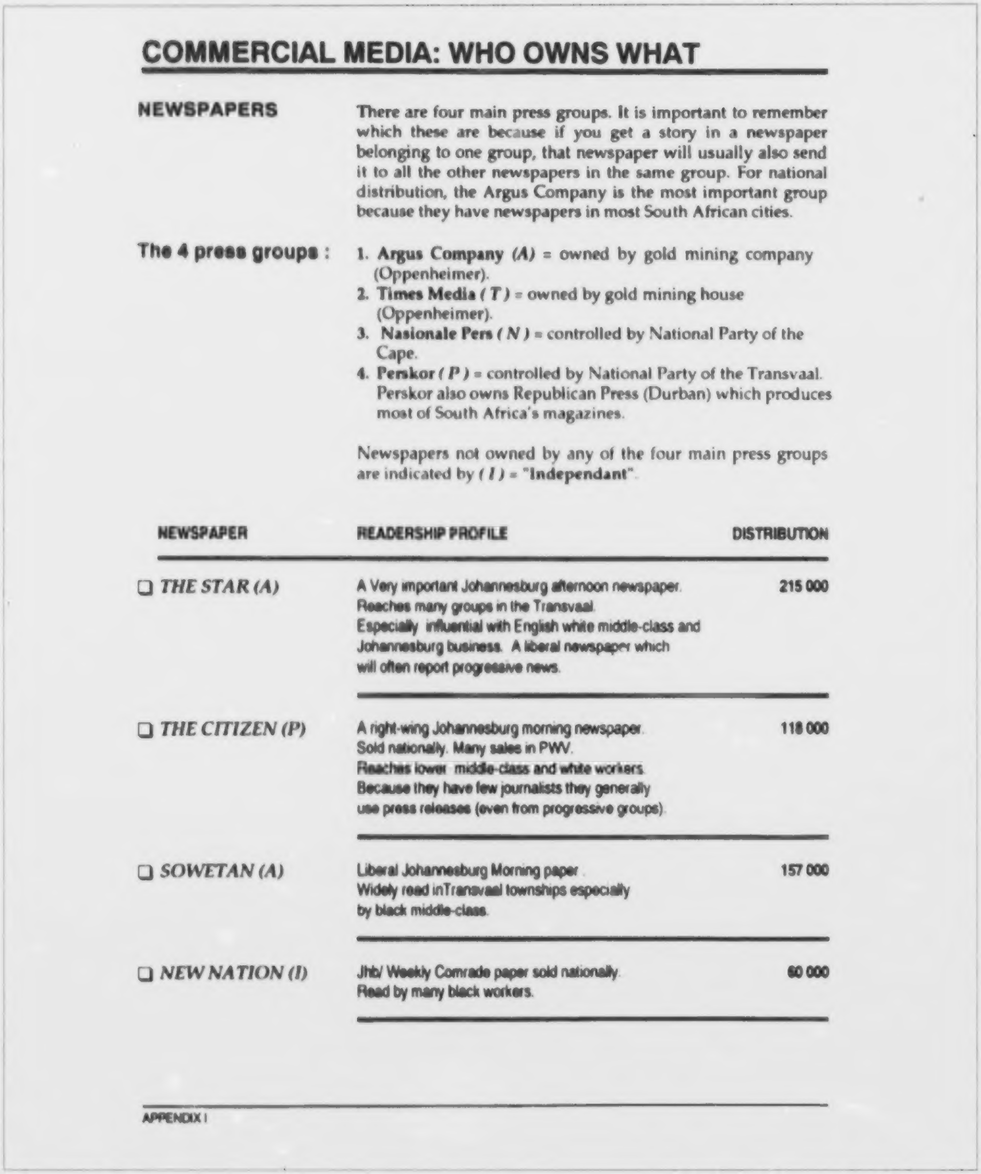
Newspapers

Note: There are four main press groups. It is important to remember which these are because if you get a story in a newspaper belonging to one group, that newspaper will usually also send it to all the other newspapers in the same group. For national distribution, the Argus Company is the most important group because they have newspapers in most South African cities.

The press groups are:

- Argus Company (A) = owned by gold mining company (Oppenheimer).
- Times Media (T) = owned by gold mining house (Oppenheimer).
- Nasionale Pers (N) = controlled by National Party of the Cape.
- Perskor (P) = controlled by National Party of the Transvaal. (Perskor also owns Republican Press (Durban) which produces most of South Africa's magazines).

A further part of the analysis of commercial media is helping groups to understand who owns the commercial media. On this page is a chart outlining the lines of ownership and an extract from a resource document which gives circulation figures. This information can help groups to decide which publication is actually reaching their target audience. This is important in a context where progressive organisations generally only feel comfortable with the alternative press, which has a combined readership that is less than that of any regional daily paper. And with a regional radio station in Natal with a listenership of over 3.4 million daily, the SABC should be an area of interest for organisations wanting to reach that constituency.



COMMERCIAL MEDIA: WHO OWNS WHAT

NEWSPAPERS

There are four main press groups. It is important to remember which these are because if you get a story in a newspaper belonging to one group, that newspaper will usually also send it to all the other newspapers in the same group. For national distribution, the Argus Company is the most important group because they have newspapers in most South African cities.

The 4 press groups :

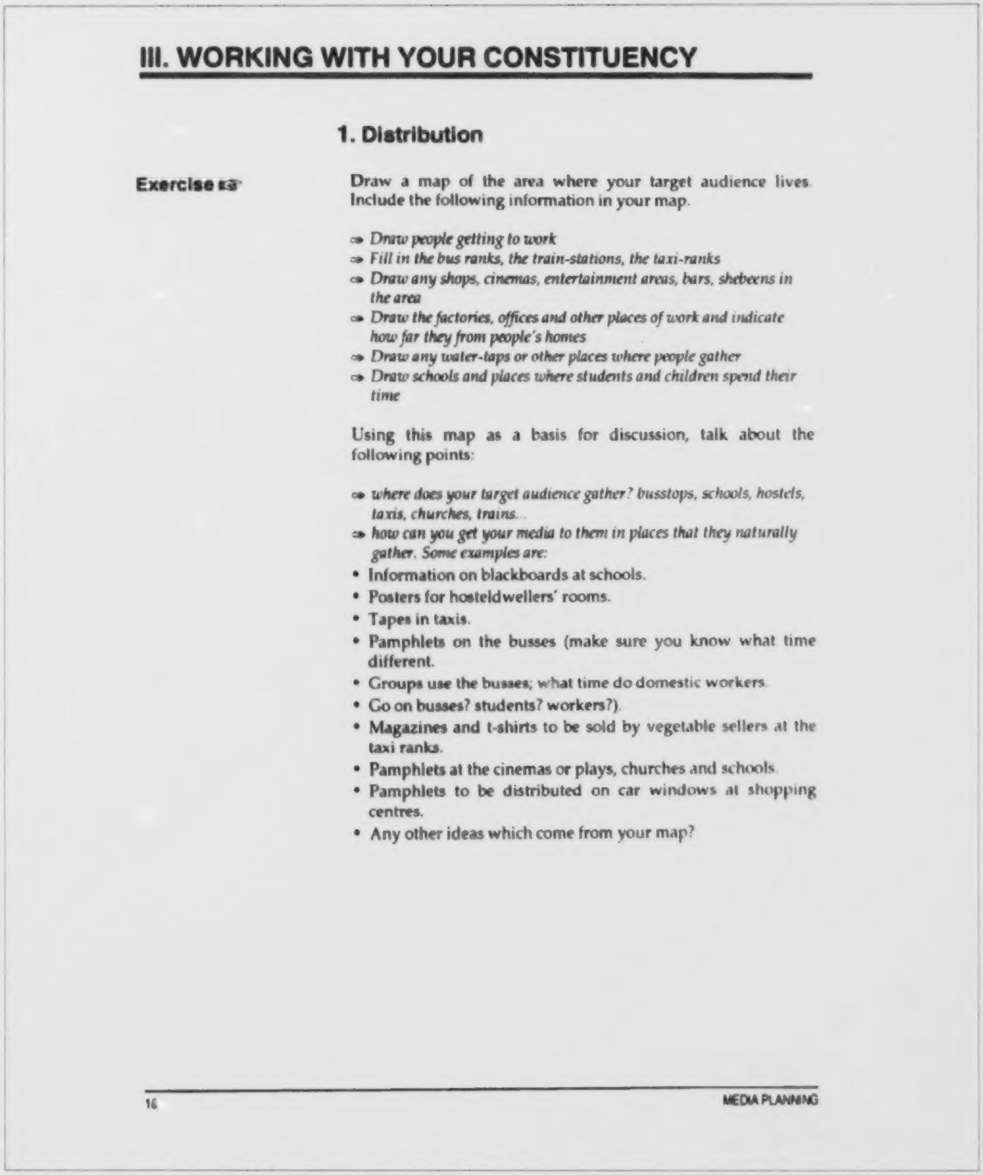
1. **Argus Company** *(A)* = owned by gold mining company (Oppenheimer).
2. **Times Media** *(T)* = owned by gold mining house (Oppenheimer).
3. **Nasionale Pers** *(N)* = controlled by National Party of the Cape.
4. **Perskor** *(P)* = controlled by National Party of the Transvaal. Perskor also owns Republican Press (Durban) which produces most of South Africa's magazines.

Newspapers not owned by any of the four main press groups are indicated by *(I)* = **"Independant"**.

NEWSPAPER	READERSHIP PROFILE	DISTRIBUTION
☐ *THE STAR (A)*	A Very important Johannesburg afternoon newspaper. Reaches many groups in the Transvaal. Especially influential with English white middle-class and Johannesburg business. A liberal newspaper which will often report progressive news.	215 000
☐ *THE CITIZEN (P)*	A right-wing Johannesburg morning newspaper. Sold nationally. Many sales in PWV. Reaches lower middle-class and white workers. Because they have few journalists they generally use press releases (even from progressive groups).	118 000
☐ *SOWETAN (A)*	Liberal Johannesburg Morning paper. Widely read inTransvaal townships especially by black middle-class.	157 000
☐ *NEW NATION (I)*	Jhb/ Weekly Comrade paper sold nationally. Read by many black workers.	60 000

APPENDIX I

Stress on Effective Distribution of Media
The following questions are routinely raised in workshops to emphasise that media is only as effective as it is widely distributed.



III. WORKING WITH YOUR CONSTITUENCY

1. Distribution

Exercise ☞

Draw a map of the area where your target audience lives. Include the following information in your map.

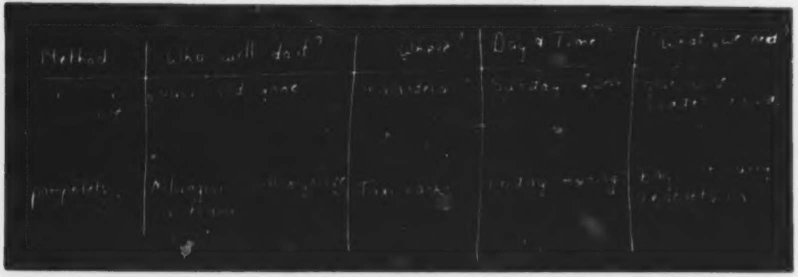
- *Draw people getting to work*
- *Fill in the bus ranks, the train-stations, the taxi-ranks*
- *Draw any shops, cinemas, entertainment areas, bars, shebeens in the area*
- *Draw the factories, offices and other places of work and indicate how far they from people's homes*
- *Draw any water-taps or other places where people gather*
- *Draw schools and places where students and children spend their time*

Using this map as a basis for discussion, talk about the following points:

- *where does your target audience gather? busstops, schools, hostels, taxis, churches, trains...*
- *how can you get your media to them in places that they naturally gather. Some examples are:*
- Information on blackboards at schools.
- Posters for hosteldwellers' rooms.
- Tapes in taxis.
- Pamphlets on the busses (make sure you know what time different.
- Groups use the busses; what time do domestic workers
- Go on busses? students? workers?).
- Magazines and t-shirts to be sold by vegetable sellers at the taxi ranks.
- Pamphlets at the cinemas or plays, churches and schools.
- Pamphlets to be distributed on car windows at shopping centres.
- Any other ideas which come from your map?

Exercise ☞

Make a list of methods you use for distribution in your area. Work out in your group how much time, people and resources you need to do this distribution. Be specific: what time would you distribute, which day of the week is best, how will you fix posters to the walls/ poles, who will buy glue if you need it etc etc. Come up with a distribution plan which looks like this:



If you regularly distribute media through members it is a good idea to ask people to take responsibility for distributing in the same area each time. This way, your members will become good at distributing in a particular place and will be able to be effective. So if Anne and Vusi are good at distributing in Malandela Rd, then they must do it there every time if this is practical.

2. How can people respond to your media ?

As progressives, we want to be able to produce media that is progressive. The state media is one-way communication, and the commercial press only offers limited space in the letters page for the audience to respond. We need to find ways that our audience can 'talk back' to our media.

eg Grassroots newsletter model.....
many media committees each producing copy for a central newsletter

eg. community video production and community screening and discussions.

eg. (in more affluent areas eg Yeoville) community run cable tv network and live community studio.

(*Note*: The above extracts are taken from the handbook "Introduction to media awareness" published by DMTG, and under discussion in the National Media Trainers' Forum.)

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Grateful acknowledgements must also go to Warren Parker, Craig Allan, Thomas McKay and Catherine Whitfield for their editing and research.

AN AUTO-CRITIQUE OF THE MASS LINE IN MEDIA TRAINING

A Critical Analysis from a Socialist Perspective of Adult Learning in a Media Training Course

Jonathan Berndt

Introduction

The full time media course which we started in 1989 set out to establish new training practices for activists from mass based organizations. During the process of running the course I made many mistakes but also learned from the experience. This paper is an attempt to uncover those learnings and to critique the assumptions that we made from a specifically Marxist perspective. A perspective which argues that

> The main lesson is always that educational innovation will fail unless it takes into account the *economic* [my emphasis] and political structures immediately around it. (Davies 1984, pp. 75)

In many ways this was the lesson that I had to learn and which the media project as a whole had to confront. By focusing the training on political activists from mass based organisations, the project has tended to deal mainly with media needs of the day as defined by these organizations. In this way, we in the project saw media as an important part of the political process and believed that it would influence the course of history in the struggle against apartheid. We knew that people could make history but we forgot the extent to which history makes people - in particular the specific historical economic conditions.

Many of the views expressed in this paper have at various times been current within the project as a whole and so there are times when I speak of 'we'. At those times when I use 'I' it is because these points that I make have been issues that I personally have thought to be important. The self criticism in this paper is in many ways my own and not that of the project as a whole. There are times when some of the views of this paper have been spoken about within the project but there are also different weightings to these points given by other people within the project. In particular, the Marxist analysis expressed in the paper is not shared by the project as a whole.

In this paper I give a brief description of the course and then go on to attempt a self criticism. However, it should be noted that this contribution is only part of a longer paper in which I go on to look at a possible alternative to training progressive media workers, an alternative which situates the training within production and argues for the training of what I have called 'red specialist' media workers.

I. The Media Training Course

In 1989 the CAP* Media Project ran a full time media training course for activists from mass based organizations. I was employed to coordinate and teach sections of the course. This was the first time that such a course had been run in the media project and, in fact to the knowledge of the project, anywhere else in South Africa. Most of the training done for activists from mass based organisations has been done using a workshop model. These workshops would take place over a few days or at best over series of weekends as has been the case with the DMTG (Durban Media Trainers Group). The only other version of full time training which we knew about was the six month course that TOPS (The Other Press Service) had just started at the end of 1988. (TOPS was primarily a computer course focusing on layout and design using DTP computer programmes, including some training on developing an awareness of media related issues.) They had just started to take on people who would learn on the job for a period of six months. As far as I could establish, this six month period was treated like an extended workshop and there was little attention given to developing an in-depth curriculum.

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* Community Arts Project (CAP)

Before we started the course, we tried to find out what other training was taking place elsewhere in the country and could find very little which resembled what we planned to do. The TOPS example that I have already mentioned had just started so it was too early for us to get any idea of how it was going to work. So we started off in an exploratory manner without any clear understanding of what we were letting ourselves in for.

When planning the course it was decided to take two trainees from each of the sectors of the Mass Democratic Movement:

- the youth came from CAYCO (Cape Youth Congress)
- the women from UWCO (United Women's Congress)
- the workers from COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions).

The Media Project was not part of the actual selection process, but we did suggest some basic selection criteria, namely that the trainees should have some basic reading and writing skills and that they should have some drawing experience or inclination towards drawing. However, when the trainees arrived we found that none of them had any real media experience or conformed to these basic criteria. The trainees were more or less illiterate; the poor reading and writing skills that they had been given by the inferior 'Bantu education system' had been forgotten in the time since they had left school.

While I argue that we were responsible for the 'mass line' in our training programmes, we also responded to requests and pressures from the mass based organizations. We had to lower the level of training in the full time course, because, even though we might have had ideas of raising the level of our training with this course, we were not able to do this given the educational level of people that the organizations put forward. One of the reasons why the course's starting time was delayed for so long was that the organizations found it difficult to find people from their ranks who would fit these criteria. So in the end they merely put forward people who expressed an interest in the course, but had very little media experience.

Some of them had worked on the production of banners or posters in the last few years but they hadn't retained much of what they had learned. Only one of the trainees had drawing experience, as he had been attending the part time drawing classes at Community Arts Project and another had taken some photographs with a small instamatic camera.

The Course Syllabus

The project planned the course as a series of extended workshops, which were structured around producing media for particular events in the year, such as June 16th or National Women's Day. So the course was broken up into 6 week workshop blocks in which the trainees would be workshopping particular media skills with me. It was planned that the trainees would work in their organizations for 3 week periods between these 6 week workshops applying the skills that they had learned, but unfortunately this did not happen due to organizational difficulties. Eventually we had to scrap the 3 week blocks (an indication that the organizations did not have the organizational infrastructure to use the trained media workers/facilitators.)

In addition to these six week workshops I included four other components to the course:

- a general media studies component run by myself,
- a photographic component which was run by Afrapix,
- a drawing component run by various part-time teachers,
- a reading and writing of English component run by a literacy traaining organization called USWE (Using Spoken and Written English).

These were run throughout the year spanning the 6 week blocks and eventually the three week periods as well.

After a week of orientation and general media studies we started with the first 6 week block. The 6 week workshops were planned as follows.

1st Workshop Block

The objective of this first workshop was to introduce the trainees to various techniques of silk-screening and to equip them in as many of these as possible. They were expected to produce a poster and a T-shirt for June 16th.

As part of this first workshop I took the trainees to the museum which has a display on the historical development of printing machinery. We then went to a large commercial printing works. After this we discussed the changes that have taken place in the labour process within the printing industry and how the machines have reflected these changes culminating in the capitalist relations of production that were so obvious in the large commercial printing works that we visited. I then tried to situate silk-screen printing within this analysis and looked at some of the advantages and disadvantages of using the silk-screen printing method. I was concerned that they should have some general knowledge of the history of printing so that they could situate what they were learning within a context.

2nd Workshop Block

The second workshop was devoted to producing a banner for National Women's Day and it involved a strong drawing element. Much of this workshop was devoted to breaking down the inhibitions and lack of self confidence which prevented the trainees from believing that they could produce drawn images.

At first they refused to draw images for the banner because they said it would look like a child's drawing and they would not be proud of what they had done. I showed them examples of images produced by peasants and workers elsewhere in the world and explained how and why these were important and valid. We spent quite a long time looking at the Chinese peasant paintings and discussing the revolution in China and how the paintings captured an important part of this revolution.

3rd Workshop Block

This was the last workshop in the calendar year and I extended it beyond the 6 weeks taking up the 3 week periods which we had decided to drop at this stage of the course. In this workshop the trainees were to draw on the skills that they had acquired from the photography and reading/writing components of the course. Their task was to break up into two groups with one group producing a wall-newspaper and the other a newsletter. They were to take the photographs and produce the written material for these publications. In addition they were to design, lay out and prepare the newsletter and wall-newspaper for printing.

I asked other organisations who were producing news letters or small publications to come and talk to the trainees about their production methods, how they defined their readership, and how they distributed their publications. Those that came were COSATU News, Crises News, ILRIG and Grassroots.

4th Workshop Block

This last block of the course was run in 1990 with the course finishing at the end of March. During this period the trainees worked in their organizations and came to the Media project for 2 days in the week (an attempt to return to our strategy of getting the trainees to to work in their organizations, but with closer work in their follow-up work in the two days with me.) In these 2 days they were to continue with their training in drawing, reading/writing, and design. There was also a session on workshop methods, on how to run media training workshops in their organizations.

Post Course Block

At this stage, one of the CAYCO trainees had dropped out of the course and it seemed as though the two COSATU trainees would be working for the Food and Allied Workers Union on a trial basis until the end of March after which time there was a possibility that they might be given full time employment by the union.

As things worked out, FAWU only employed one of the trainees and UWCO came forward with a request that the course be extended for their two trainees. We agreed to this and they worked on a photo-documentary of their organization. We encountered problems with CAYCO, which with the unbanning of the ANC and other organizations, went through a process of reconstruction as part of SAYCO (South African Youth Congress). During this process it was impossible to set up any programme for the remaining CAYCO trainee and we agreed to hold over his further training until such time as the youth organizations had worked through their restructuring process.

Throughout the year I had evaluation report-back meetings with the organizations. They were informed about the progress of the trainees and consulted about future plans. It was at one of these evaluation meetings that we decided to drop the 3 week blocks when trainees were meant to be working in their respective organizations.

II. My Self Criticism

The Workshop Method

The workshop method that I employed was similar to the method that we had used in the past and was prevalent in alternative educational circles. Most education and training in the alternative educational movement in South Africa has been done in the form of workshops. In defining 'people's education' in their publication entitled 'What is People's Education? An Approach to Running Workshops,' the Centre for Adult and Continuing Education (CACE) outline the basic principles of workshops as follows;

> It is a collective process, involving people in teaching each other and in learning by doing. (CACE 1990 pp. 1)

The origins of 'peoples education' is based on the concept of 'popular education' as developed in Latin America. Arnold, Barndt, and Burke (1984) suggest that there are basic adult education principles such as,

> Start with the experience of the learner, learning by doing, ...

These then are some of the basic principles of 'popular education' which they say uses a dialectical method and which is based on the following premises:

> The *theoretical* basis of our educational approach is its ideological conception, its view of the world, its political objective.
> The educational *methodology* is our practice, how we organize learning experiences, based on our ideological view, our theoretical understanding.
> *Technique* refers to the use of tools or activities that can be used for any purpose, i.e., applied to any methodology, used to further any ideology. (Arnold et. al. 1984, pp. 35)

Firstly they do not say what their view of the world is and we are left to assume that their work as popular educators is aimed at combating injustice in the world. While this is obviously something that we would support, this does not tell us what their world view is. They talk about developing an understanding of the *structural roots* of the problems that people are faced with and how the establishment education system perpetuates the *prevailing economic and political system*, but there is no *world view* that they give us as an alternative to this. There is a strong sense that they would like a more egalitarian, just society but it is not clearly stated and there is no real reference to the political and economic struggle between classes in society. This lack of a class analysis is fairly typical of popular educators and has been a strong criticism of Freire's work which has been seminal in the development of popular education theory. (See Youngman 1986, ch 5).

One of the main reasons why this method is so popular in the alternative educational fraternity is because of the high level of learner participation. But, as I will argue, one's pedagogy cannot be based only on participation. There are other factors that one has to take into account - factors that the workshop method that I used did not acknowledge.

Using what I knew about the workshop method I started off by trying to find out what the trainees already knew about the subject and placed this often common sense knowledge in the wider context of the subject. After this I set up a practical task for them to complete in the six week period and during this time we stopped to evaluate what people were doing. Using the 'action - reflection - new action' model, these evaluation sessions tried to be as participatory as possible. Everybody was given a chance to speak and they were all asked to say what they thought they had learned in the workshop. These evaluation sessions were seen as an opportunity for the learners to reflect on what they had been doing in the workshop.

My role during the workshop was to act as facilitator, helping people over the obstacles they encountered as they tried to carry out the practical tasks. We assumed that people had basic skills in measuring, design and even drawing (even though their drawings might be naive in style). The idea was that people on the course already had a body of knowledge which they could use and that the course would give them an opportunity to realize this and so become empowered in the process of self realization. What we failed to sufficiently acknowledge was that if you are trying to teach skills which have a complexity to them which extends into the social relations of society at large then one encounters a series of problems.

The first problem that I found with this workshop method, is that the focus tends to become the process of self-realization rather than learning new skills. This is fine if all one is concerned with is the raising of people's critical consciousness. The Education Projects Unit (EPU) acknowledge, that,

> It should be noted while the critical perspective does not deny the need for structural change, this approach tends to emphasize the cognitive or 'conscientization' aspects at the perhaps unwitting expense of the structural aspects. (EPU, 1988)

If we, as the proponents of experiential learning seem to do, are concerned with structurally changing society, then we would need more than just the critical tools for criticizing the present political and economic system. We would need people with the skills to actually take control of the sites of economic and political power in society and in fact to rule. To ignore the 'structural aspects' or to underestimate their determining importance is in the end to lead people into an idealist cul-de-sac.

The second problem that I then encountered was that when we dealt with practical skills training, the method was unable to see learning as both theoretical and practical work: there was an empiricist bent to the whole process emphasizing learning by doing without any real theoretical contextualization of these skills within social reality (see Boydell 1976 and Youngman 1986). The workshop method we used dealt with skills within the framework of the concept of experiential learning - the 'doing' being the experience from which one learns. We gave people silk-screens and showed them how to pull the squeegee and print a poster or a T-shirt. After this they merely repeated the process and in the 'doing' we felt that they would learn. What I found so problematic was that this 'learning by doing' was usually very simplistic in how it dealt with fairly complex skills, skills that were deeply immersed in the fabric of social relations and relations of production in society at large.

The third problem was that it saw knowledge as something to be encountered rather than produced. The learning by doing was somehow limited to experiencing the activity involved in a particular skill. There was no sense in which the learner was actually producing the knowledge for him/her self in the same way in which value is produced by labour. What ever labour was involved was encapsulated within the workshop and was not seen as being related to the general relations of production within society. It was also not seen as productive labour but as labour in the abstract - merely 'doing'.

The fourth problem was that because the course was constructed as a series of disparate workshops the trainees forgot what they had learned fairly quickly. By the end of the course they had already forgotten what they had done at the beginning of the year. This is one of the most serious problems with the workshop method: it compartmentalizes learning into isolated fragments (workshops) rather than seeing learning as a continuum, a life-long activity which is integrated into the learners socio-political context.

The Socio-Political Context of the Course

As I have indicated, 'peoples education' (or popular education) which uses the workshop method, address issues of transformation purely on a ideological level. (Most of Freire's work focuses on literacy and consciousness-raising, the major model of progressive adult education as we know it.) Very little attention is given to the material socio-economic conditions and determinants of the learning experience and the application of the skills that have been acquired. Instead there is a focus on what has come to be known as consciousness raising or *conscientization*, which tends to simplify consciousness as individual consciousness rather than 'class consciousness'. If there had been a clearer and more developed understanding of consciousness we would have given the class position of the learners far more importance. Our failure to do so blinded us to the determining economic factors of their class position.

When I speak about the socio-economic context of the course I am referring to these issues and the broader political and economic context in which the course took place. I am not attempting to contrast the highly political approach that we had to training with a crude economism, but, hopefully, as my argument will show a possible synthesis of the political and economic. I will focus on one aspect of the political economy of South Africa which has particular significance for an understanding of the context from which the trainees came - namely the issue of unemployment.

One of the major reasons why there is such a high degree of unemployment in a country like South Africa is because the South African economy is a capitalist economy. Within this mode of production the worker works for a certain time of the day in order to reproduce her/him self, the rest of the day is spent producing surplus value. There is, as Marx says, a continual battle around what constitutes the length of the working day, so much so that...

> The creation of the normal working-day is, therefore, the product of a protracted civil war, ... between the capitalist class and the working class. (Marx)

The victory of the eight hour working day has forced the capitalist to find other ways of extending the working day to extract the maximum surplus value from the workers. The capitalist introduces machinery to speed up the production process, and so shortens the time necessary for the worker to produce enough to theoretically make it possible for him/her to survive and so lengthen the time when the capitalist can extract surplus value from the labour of the worker. This is not enough because the capitalist has another way of extending the working day - namely by using overtime (see Marx's Capital ch. 10). In South Africa, employers,

> ... only have to pay an extra third for overtime work

> in most cases, which is low by international standards. ... and the ... limits on overtime are high ...which makes overtime very cheap for the employers. (Labour Research Services 1988)

Consequently there is a high level of unemployment in South Africa where it is more profitable for the capitalist to use the practice of overtime instead of employing more workers or even introducing more efficient machines. The unemployment figures that I have been able to obtain indicate that in certain areas in the Western Cape the figure could be as high as 60% with the total unemployed in the country as a whole being as high as 7 million in 1990. (Labour Research Services 6/90)

The chances of the trainees, all of whom had been unemployed when they came on the course, finding any kind of job, let alone one in which they could use the media skills they had acquired on the course, were slim. Firstly they came onto the course as unemployed workers and had no job to return to, and secondly they all came from a discriminatory education system which explicitly never educated them to get jobs as media producers. The apartheid education system was explicit in its intention to educate people from different racial groupings for particular jobs in the economy.

Neither we nor the organisations which sent them onto the course ever considered that employment might be an issue. It was the trainees themselves who raised the issue when they expressed apprehension and confusion about whether they were going to get paid jobs in their organisations after doing the course. Although we never offered the course with the idea that we would be training them for media jobs, the trainees themselves developed the expectation that they could use the skills they were learning to improve their chances of economic survival. This is not too surprising if one considers the fact that doing a full time course over a period of 1 to 2 years is different to doing a short workshop. It is to be expected that because the trainees themselves were investing a lot of their time by doing the course that they would expect to get something more than just a critical understanding of the politics of media out of the course.

Dependency

The fact that we gave the trainees bursaries was in itself to prove a problem. We never thought that we were creating a false kind of development by offering bursaries. Dispensing bursaries, as we were doing, felt like we were participating in a process of underdevelopment similar to that forced onto third world countries who received aid from international capital. We understood that to prevent people from drifting away from the course, that they would have to have some form of income. In the past we had found that the economic pressure of survival outweighed any altruistic ideals of education. The problem was that we never saw the wider implications of giving the trainees bursaries and that in fact the way in which we constructed the course had a direct connection to this kind of financial base: for example we never addressed the issue of self-sufficiency in our training methodology.

We had raised enough money to pay the trainees a bursary for the time they were on the course. The amount we decided on was based on the minimum living wage figures we could get from COSATU and ranged from R680 for the older trainees to R580 for the youth from CAYCO. Economically the course was a wonderful opportunity to learn and at the same time receive an income. While it definitely meant that the trainees did not drop out of the course, it nevertheless created a situation of economic dependency.

As well as the problem of dependency itself, there was a further problem in that the trainees were not learning skills that they could necessarily use in the job market. The media skills they were taught were not seen as formal media skills which the trainees could use to get employment in the formal job market. The Media Project was adamant in its position that we were not training people to earn a living or get a job. The Media Project had since its inception seen itself as a training or resource service for mass based organisations and that it trained activists who were going to work in their organisations in what would probably be a voluntary capacity. One needs to understand that there was a perception in these organisations themselves, which saw media work as voluntary, which influenced the position taken by the media project.

While we had understood that the trainees would need some form of economic support while they were doing the course, we assumed that their media work could take place free of economic determinants once they had finished the course. Like the organisations from which they came, the political commitment we had asked for, which was something that we had already discovered in our running of training workshops, could never be a sufficient guarantee for making people attend a course or workshop in a consistent manner. It was to be a rude shock to find that once the trainees completed the course, there would no longer be any economic basis for their media work. If left to their own devices, the chances of their continuing to use and develop the media skills that they had acquired on the course would be remote.

Walking on One Leg

Our Approach to Media Training

(The idea of 'walking on one leg' comes from Mao who used it to criticize the one-sided approach to economic development, an approach which focused only on centralized capital intensive industry and ignored small scale rural development. I feel it is a useful idea in terms of what I am trying to uncover in this paper. I feel that in the past we had a one-sided approach to media training which focused exclusively on the small scale training of activists in basic media skills. We have never trained more specialized media workers.)

The CAP Media Project had been in existence since the Culture and Resistance Festival in Botswana. With its inception in 1982 it saw itself as a production service project for organizations and started producing posters for various events and issues. However, given the political climate of popular front politics it soon decided to build training into its service work by getting the organizations to produce the posters themselves, the assumption being that everybody was potentially a media producer.

This was the most fundamental assumption that we made and it was to determine all of the future work of the project including the full time media course in 1989. In my report on the full time course in 1990 I outlined the aims of the course as follows,

> The long terms aims of the full time course have been to train media facilitators who would work in mass based organizations developing factory floor

> and grass roots media (popular media). This is in line with the overall objectives of the media project. (Berndt 1990)

In our 1989 project report the aims of the project were given as follows,

> Our field of concern in the CAP media workshop is in assisting to extend and improve the media capacities of progressive organizations.... we consider that our particular role lies in the decentralized processes of media production. In that it is the ordinary membership who must give shape and meaning to the ideas and direction of the mass based organization ... Our practice therefore aims to provide;
> - basic education, skills training and experience in simple methods of media production appropriate to local use and distribution.
> - skills training and general assistance to enable organizations to address this process autonomously within their ranks. (Berndt 1989)

These aims were further articulated in a paper by a fellow worker in the media project when she said that;

> In the CAP Media workshop we regard our area of work as the 'barefoot' element in the complex weave of this development of media as the voice of people's power.' (Devilliers 1990)

Flowing from the ideology of popular front politics in the progressive movement, we believed that everyone could be a media producer. We focused almost exclusively on training the general membership of mass based organizations to a very basic level of skills. What we failed to see was the necessity of training more specialized media workers. The result has been that those whom we trained have not continued to work as media producers within the organizations. The reasons for this are complex and varied. But one common reason was that there was nothing for them to do, they were not trained to a level where they could extend their skills and we and the organizations did not see the necessity for doing this at the time. They were not seen as media workers but as organizational members with some media skills.

A further consequence of this approach has been that we have had to continually train and retrain the shifting membership of the organizations. There has been no time to extend the training of some of those whom we had trained in the past. Also, the fact that the financial basis of their continued work as media workers was never seriously addressed in their respective organizations, has meant that those whom we have trained have had no financial resources to continue with media production.

In the end we never got to train more highly skilled and organized media workers because we were caught up in the populist myth of what I would call the 'mass line'.[1] The mass mobilization taking place in the period in which we were working obviously influenced us. The task of the day as far as we could see it was to train activists in basic technical media skills which they could use in their political work. This approach which I have called 'following the mass line', tends to treat any form of specialization with suspicion.

However, I am not trying to advocate a non-politicized form of specialization, but a specialization that is political - that is, 'red'. To focus on either too strongly would mean that we would end up figuratively speaking, walking on one leg. In the final analysis this is what we did, we continually trained activists in rudimentary media skills and ignored the training of more highly specialized and politicized media workers in the mass democratic movement - we walked on one leg in our approach to training.

Walking on one leg as you might imagine is a

[1] The concept of the 'mas line' comes from the Mao Dse Dung who at the time of reconstruction in China was faced with the dilemn of how to proceed with economic development without any specialized technicians. The Russians withdrew their specialists because of political differences about economi development. Mao felt th the focus should be in the countryside with the peasants while the Russia argued that China had to develop their heavy industry. Left with little resources except for a larg potential labour force Mao chose a path which used people rather than technology. Mass mobilization rather than technical expertise was the order of the day. I saw similarities between this and the programmes of mass action that were taking place in South Africa. The slogan was 'Mass Action for Peoples Power' and there was a strong focus on activism rather than critical engagement. My role as an educator was seen by myself and to a large extent by the project as a whole, a facilitating this activism by providing technical skills training for the cadres on the street.

slow and difficult process, but there was some forward movement. I feel we have contributed to the growth of organizational media on a very low-tech rudimentary level and while this has been useful for the organizations during the periods of repression, it has left them ill-equipped to deal with the problems of the present period of transition and struggle for hegemony in areas like mass communication. Unfortunately, organisations and the various training intiatives around the country, have not been able to develop an understanding of the political imperatives of gaining control of the dominant means of communication. ■

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EDUCATION FOR A THIRD CINEMA IN SOUTH AFRICA
Reflections on a Community Video Education Project in Alexandra, Johannesburg

Jacqueline Maingard

This paper identifies some features of community video in this country and relates them to the development of Third Cinema in South Africa. My concern to relate community video to Third Cinema is based on what I perceive to be a need in film education and production to have the benefit of global experience with which to reflect on developments here and also to access theoretical approaches that are not only Eurocentric.

The Concept 'Third Cinema'

I will begin by broadly defining 'Third Cinema' - 'broadly' because the term itself is one that needs to be defined in context. Thus, for example, the South African experience in education for the making of Third Cinema is in a position to assist the on-going definition of the term itself.

In 1969 two film-makers Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino declared Third Cinema to be 'the most important revolutionary artistic event of our times' (Chanan, 1983, pp. 27). For them Third Cinema is the cinema of liberation concerned with the decolonisation of culture - a cinema of the masses. If 'first cinema' represents the viewer as a 'consumer of ideology' - for example Hollywood cinema, and 'second cinema' reflects the concerns of film authors - for example European 'art' cinema and some of the cinema of Godard, Third Cinema is by contrast the only cinema capable of transforming society (Chanan, 1983, pp. 20-21).

Third Cinema for Solanas and Getino is made 'with the camera in one hand and a rock in the other' (Chanan, 1983, pp. 24) - an apt description perhaps for these times in South Africa. It is a militant, active, revolutionary, political, research cinema. It is cinema that is made, distributed and for which people are educated in these terms.

Around the time that Solanas and Getino wrote and published their article 'Towards a Third Cinema', other cinema movements were concerned with describing and defining their work in similar terms. This is exemplified by the manifestos for a new cinema and an alternative cinema in Morocco and Egypt and in organisational terms by the establishment of the Federation Panafricaine des Cineastes (FEPACI), to mention just a few of the significant developments in Third Cinema.

In visual terms *Xala* made by Ousmane Sembene in Senegal in 1974 may be described as Third Cinema. In brief, the film is a critique of the neo-colonial attitude of the new governing body in an African state and an indictment of its corruptive ways, while portraying the peasant and working class as being the class that will liberate society from corruption. Not only is the film's theme exemplary of the concerns of Third Cinema, but its style also highlights the way in which Third Cinema can use aesthetic means for challenging dominant aesthetic approaches. This is revealed from the very first image in the film where in medium close-up a drummer, dressed in bright clothing beats out a very fast, very loud rhythm that demands the active attention of the viewer. This is a rather different approach to the more conventional film style of Hollywood films.

In 1982 Teshome Gabriel published a book exploring the relationship between Third Cinema and the Third World. His book essentially maintains a geographically located perspective as the title suggests - *Third cinema in the Third World: The Aesthetic of Liberation.*

Increasingly and in various contexts however, the term 'Third Cinema' is valuable precisely because it liberates cinema from categorization on geographical bases. After all the term 'African cinema' tells us only that a particular cinema is in or about Africa. It may also signify other concerns such as colonialism and racism but hardly in any definitive way.

I am not arguing for being definitive however, since the very nature and diversity of cinema makes it difficult to define in any context. Rather I am proposing the term 'Third Cinema' as a way of identifying cinema practices that are in Solanas' words 'the expression of a new culture and of social changes' (Willemen, 1989, pp. 9). It is therefore also a term that can unify cinema practices, not only on geographical lines but more importantly, in terms of their place in advancing democracy.

In 1986 a Third Cinema conference was held at the Edinburgh Festival and a major part of its concern was to locate the work of black filmmakers in Britain in the 1980s in relation to the concept 'Third Cinema' (Willemen, 1989, pp. 1). Similarly, without wanting to oversimplify the complexities of locating cinema practices in this way, nor the term 'Third Cinema' itself, I am proposing the concept as one which might enable cinema practices in South Africa to be examined against a backdrop that is not only geographical or national. For, I would argue that the concept can extend analysis of the practices of cinema, thereby preventing a myopic examination of cinema at the expense of global developments, while simultaneously maintaining a consciousness of this particular socio-political context.

Community Video Education and Production in South Africa

I will now place some of the developments in community video education and production in this country within this rather loosely defined conceptual arena. I will not cover every single development and will concentrate mostly on the community video education project run by the Film and Allied Workers Organisation (FAWO) in Alexandra, Johannesburg during 1989.

Essentially I am looking at educational practices within community video that propose to enhance the development of Third Cinema in South Africa. So my focus is on community video education that would promote the making of Third Cinema. Furthermore, since Third Cinema is cinema that promotes enquiry and critique at all levels - be they aesthetic or thematic, or in the making of fiction or documentary films, short films or feature-length films, or more macro concerns - I am looking at educational practices that are democratic and innovative.

It is important to define the terms 'community' and 'community video' at this juncture. I am not going to problematize the term 'community' - rather I am working from a position that includes geographical and organisational bodies as well as the various sectors of society such as youth, women and workers. From this perspective the term 'community' can refer to a whole township, or a street in a township, a large federation such as COSATU or a single trade union, and a civic association or organisation.

'Community video' refers to video, usually documentary, that represents the perspective of a particular community. The community perspective is defined not only, or necessarily, by the extent of the community's participation in its representation on video but also by the extent to which it is represented in its own ideological terms. It is also video that emerges from and is attached to community struggles that oppose apartheid and seek to redress the imbalance of socio-economic and political power in South Africa. It is concerned with issues that affect groups of people that may be identified as a 'community' rather than with issues that are not commonly experienced and that are individual in nature. Video that is not community-based - engaged in fulfilling the articulated needs of a specific community - is not community video.

The first organisational development in community video in this country was the Community Video Resource Association established at the University of Cape Town in the early 80s. It later became independent of the university and changed its name to the Community Video Education Trust, as it is still known. Its work during the early-to-late 80s was focused on making videos about localised community concerns - either geographically located or issue-based. An example of this is the video *Bellville Community Health Project* which describes a community project and explains its significance and value in the community and in relation to the socio-political context of health care in Cape Town. The approach was to use the video-making skill of the staff of the organisation to make the videos that the community requested. A quote from Liz Fish who directed the project in this period reflects the organisation's position:

> My understanding then was the community determines exactly what they want and you operate the camera and they make all the decisions. (Interview, 1988)

In time she moved from being 'the people's video camera with very little intervention' (Interview, 1988) to a position where the video product was a collaborative effort arrived at in discussion between the video-maker and representatives of the community group requesting the video.

A second type of community video emerging in the mid-to-late 80s may be defined on an ideological basis. By this I mean that the videos made reflect an ideological consistency with the groups and organisations about which (and in some cases for which) videos are made. Video News Services based in Johannesburg takes this position - making videos primarily about worker issues and worker organisation, and documenting union congresses and worker strikes. The video-makers use their skills to represent the perspective of workers in a way that advances the working class struggle (Meintjies, 1989). An example here is the video *Compelling Freedom* which documents worker culture, using numerous examples of cultural events and presentations integrated with illustrations from the work situations on which the cultural works are based.

Another approach to community video is one where representatives of a community engage in a collective process. A team of co-workers is established which includes a facilitator, community representatives and learners of production skills 'to co-operatively solve community media problems' (Criticos, 1988, pp. 8). This is the approach of the Media Resource Centre at the University of Natal, Durban.

The Community Video Project at Alexandra

The community video project at Alexandra began early in 1989. In essence it is an educational project and I will describe something of how the project started and the organisation of education in the project. My focus is on a particular period in the project's development which formed the basis of the work which has since continued.

Concerned with the development of a progressive film culture in South Africa, the Film and Allied Workers Organisation (FAWO) responded enthusiastically to the request from a group in Alexandra for video training. A group of FAWO members interested in community video education and production came together to steer the project. A small grant enabled FAWO to employ me on a part-time basis as project co-ordinator/researcher in 1989 and to purchase a video cassette recorder and monitor for screenings. Equipment requirements were kept to a minimum and when required we borrowed from FAWO members. With the general lack of resources in mind and to keep expectations at a realistic level we began with a number of film screenings and discussions at the Alexandra Arts Centre on Sunday afternoons. Initially a large number arrived for the screenings and after some weeks the group of committed participants regularised to around 12-15 participants. At about the same time we started production skills training and from then onwards we combined and integrated screenings and discussions with production skills classes. The training group worked collectively and devised the programme in a way that utilised skills available within the group in various areas of film work, covering a range from scriptwriting to technical and pre-production skills. Being a FAWO project we were also able to link in with other FAWO education projects such as the screenings of South African documentaries in a 12-week series. This kind of link supplemented the education that the Sunday training sessions could achieve.

The programme we devised worked initially at the level of basic skills training developing to increasingly complex layers of skills training. We began with each participant having a hands-on experience of making one shot and then moved on to each participant achieving three shots in sequence. Every exercise was accompanied by detailed and extensive critical discussion, thereby permitting the introduction of such issues as (in the three-shots exercise) how shots work alongside each other and the development of a story. The next exercise was the accomplishment of a nine-shot sequence - again accompanied by discussion and critique including the viewing of nine-shot sequences taken from films already made.

The final stage in this production skills component was an exercise that was meant to be brief but that had so much potential for learning that it stretched to about 8 weeks in all. We sensed that it would be valuable for the group to generate some new footage for an editing workshop and decided to choose a short story for the group to script. We suggested *The Suitcase* by Es'kia Mphahlele which the group divided into three sections. The participants then divided themselves into three subgroups, each subgroup scripting and shooting its own section of the story. Shooting was on location in Alexandra which gave the group new and bigger learning opportunities than the training workshops.

By this stage we had held a number of scriptwriting workshops and worked very closely with each group in scripting its section. This was done on a call-in basis - in other words the trainers gave input and did some exercises on scripting and storyboarding but once the groups were at work on the scripting they were free to call in a trainer for assistance, but undertook the work mainly on their own.

The result of this process is the short video called *The Suitcase*. It was edited finally in one of the progressive video organisations in Johannesburg with the assistance of a skilled editor. Although this part of the project was not a hands-on experience for the participants, they were fully involved in the decision-making process.

Since these beginnings, this group has made two documentaries which were entered in the 1990 FAWO short film competition at the Weekly Mail Film Festival. One of the documentaries *Sundays in Alex* won first place in the documentary section.

A second group was established in August 1989 with the production skills training following a similar format to that of the first group. This group completed a short video based on a script written by two group members. Called *The Candidate*, it deals with the demise of a self-appointed 'mayor' and was also entered in the short film competition.

One of the major outcomes of this work is the move to establish a full-time community video education programme in 1991. Early in the development of the course at Alexandra the steering group recognised the potential value of establishing a full-time programme for the development of community-based video production units. The work I have described formed the basis of attempts to obtain funding for this programme to enable it to begin in 1991.

The community video approach that I have described here in some detail is based on the premise that people need to be able to represent themselves and their communities in the media. The mass media in this country have by and large misrepresented the concerns of the oppressed or not represented them at all. The different approaches to community video that I have identified have a common intent - to describe a community's experiences from its own perspective, whether that be an ideological perspective adopted by skilled video-makers or a perspective that is represented by the control of a community over the processes of production. The community video project at Alexandra aimed to empower people to image themselves and their community - in short to develop their own image-culture. The developments I have described are the first steps taken in this direction.

There are however many issues to be considered and worked on. One of the most crucial issues relates to the question of accountability - how to ensure maximum ongoing contact with and accountability to the community represented. This in turn refers to questions of definition - for example the viability of referring to the geographical entity of Alexandra as a community has to be considered. To a degree the question of accountability can be assisted by working within democratic structures and organisations that already exist with constant efforts to remain in contact with people at the street level. This raises questions about video distribution - another area that FAWO and other progressive bodies such as the Film Resource Unit in Johannesburg are working on to develop distribution networks that will reach people on the street.

Community Video and Third Cinema

Having raised some issues and questions that need to be considered in the development of community video I will return to the link between the developments in this particular community video education project and the concerns of Third Cinema. Clearly what I have described is of enormous significance in forging new film culture in this country, albeit at the micro level at this stage. This project is engaged in assisting the establishment of a cinema in South Africa that is in the hands of the people who have been denied access to the cinema, and particularly to cinema education and the means of production. At a most fundamental level this project is beginning to close the gaps that apartheid created and maintained. It is not only seeking to develop pedagogical methods that are open, learner-centred and experiential, but in addition, the videos produced are located within the lives and experiences of the communities they seek to represent.

In conclusion I propose that we are developing further bases for the definition of Third Cinema in the South African context. A new cinematic practice that educates for community production using democratic educational principles and empowering communities or community representatives to represent themselves on video is being forged. The community video education project that I have described is one example of this new practice. ■

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Part VI

Media to develop Media Awareness

Media to develop Media Awareness offers two descriptive chapters that outline projects that have attempted not to talk about media awareness, but have built a critical dimension into their texts. As alternative forms of media, they stand in a different relationship to power to mainstream products. Both are directed at audiences who are infrequently reflected in the media in an empowering way. The Storyteller Group use the popular cultural form of comics as a basic literacy tool. They provoke debate and with their particular South African contexts strive to be accessible and authentic for their audiences.

Solomons' *A Songololo Experience* outlines the Molo Songololo project, a children's publication, with its particular approach, content and form. This media form could be considered appropriate on two particular levels: it is not exploitative of children, and it importantly nurtures creative communicators by encouraging children's personal expressions and contributions.

Esterhuysen and Solomons write from their experiential position, one that attempts to use much of the awareness of media that we have been exploring. Their attempts are different to any described as yet, for they attempt to build the mechanisms of this awareness into their products, products which do not ask for unreflective consumption, but that ask for critical yet pleasurable readings.

'Heyta Ngwenya!' 'Sharp! Sharp'! Popular Visual Literature and a New Pedagogy

Peter Esterhuysen

The International Year of Literacy has highlighted the plight of illiterate people in South Africa. However, as we move towards a new South Africa, there is increasing recognition that the primary need in this country may be for 'post literacy' work.

> Because of widespread low quality education and a high drop out rate, many young people and adults do have the very basics of literacy. They do not need more primers. What they need is relevant reading and educational programmes to follow on from the basics, taking them deeper into literacy, and inevitably, into a language of wider communication (French 1990, pp. 4).

At a post literacy level, there are three different target audiences, with varying needs, to consider:

- adult workers in urban areas who need educational upgrading,

adults in rural areas who have had little, if any, formal education, and

- young adults and children who have been handicapped by the virtual collapse of the formal black schooling system in the last ten years.

What is most needed in all these areas is a wide range of stimulating and appropriate texts to motivate learners to read and thus consolidate their language skills.

Popular Visual Literature

From the chapbooks and penny dreadfuls of 19th century Britain to the pamphlet stories of the Nigerian Onitsha Market place, popular literature has always been associated with lucid reading and has often gone hand-in-hand with the development of mass literacy. This insight forms the basis of the publishing philosophy of the Storyteller Group, a new publishing venture which is attempting to meet the needs of millions of second language readers, who up until now have been largely ignored by the mainstream publishing industry. We believe that dynamic popular visual literature (particularly the comic genre) produced on a mass scale can play a powerful role in the promotion of reading and the consolidation of literacy skills in South Africa.

Statistics suggest that the comic book is one of the most popular forms of literature in the so-called Third World. In Mexico, for instance, half a billion comic books are printed every year. According to Gemini News Service, each comic is read by approximately seven people, which means that one third of the population reads a comic each week. In contrast, only 2-4% of Mexicans read more conventional media (Ross 1988). Similar reading patterns prevail in other countries in Latin American, Asia (China alone accounts for 130 million comic books) and in parts of Francophone Africa (Esterhuysen & Napper 1990).

By all accounts, the visual presentation and format of the comic medium has proven to be crucial, both in attracting the newly literate and in enhancing understanding. Research in other countries suggests that the marriage of images and words can make the essence of a story understandable with a relative ease not shared by the more conventional forms of literary expression (Napper and Esterhuysen 1989)

All this would seem to imply that the comic medium could play a powerful role in promoting reading in South Africa. However, the communicative power of the medium is limited by the fact that, unlike the countries quoted, we do not have an indigenous comic industry and comics in South Africa have never achieved popular status. Before comics can become truly effective communicators, the medium itself will have to be popularised.

Josh Brown has written that the desperate need for popular communication in South Africa

> requires a reconsideration of the power of comic book conventions to present information. But, then, it is necessary to experiment [with] and excercise those techniques to their fullest to evaluate how well they work or don't work (Brown 1988, p10).

Such experimentation and evaluation will prove crucial, and exciting, but can only truly take place, we believe, once we have achieved a 'critical mass'. The occasional appearance of a comic book, whatever its merits, is insufficient to establish a reading habit. A wide range of appropriate titles, published with regular frequency, is needed to cater for varieties of interest and different levels of proficiency. Moreover, titles must be published on a scale commensurate with a popular readership numbering millions rather than thousands.

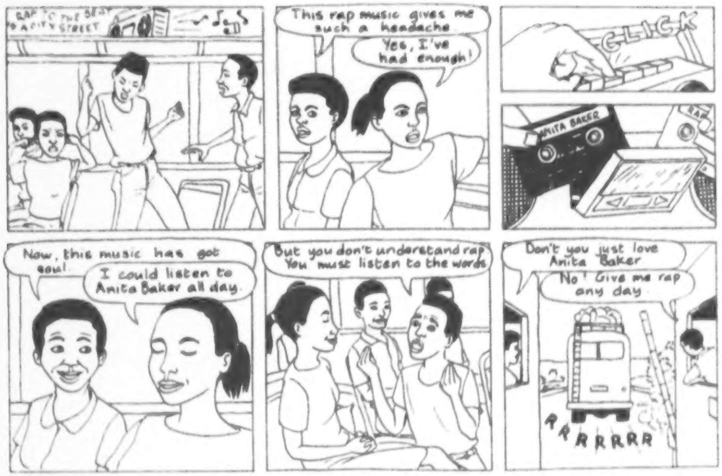
Initial responses to '99 Sharp Street,' one of our first comic projects, provides some confirmation that comics can indeed speak to popular audiences in South Africa, while offering second language teachers at many levels within the educational system a powerful teaching resource.

'99 Sharp Street'

One of the largest constraints facing publishers of popular literature is distribution. Distribution networks are controlled by monopolies and mainly cater for white audiences. Thus when clothing chain, Sales House, announced that it was launching a glossy magazine for free distribution to its 750 000 account holders, we approached them with the concept of a youth comic which would be broadly educational as well as entertaining, and which would be serialised in the magazine. Sales House approved the idea and so '99 Sharp Street' was born.

Through the adventures of twin brothers, Lebo and Veli Moeketsi and their close friend, Tandi Cele, the comic explores the experiences of young people growing up in urban South Africa today - in a dynamic and accessible way. Blendng colourful and detailed artwork, 'hip' language and humorous situations, '99 Sharp Street' sets out to attract the ever-growing audience of young adults whose limited reading proficiency prevent them from enjoying so much of the literature published in this country.

The comic is set in Hillbrow and focuses mainly on the schooling experiences of our different protagonists. The twins have left the township and come to stay in their mother's flat in Hillbrow in order to complete their studies. They attend a 'backstreet' college in Johannesburg called Stride Universal College, run by Sydney Mabaso, an eccentric headmaster who believes that travel is the only educator. The


This rap music gives me such a headache
Yes, I've had enough!
CLICK
ANITA BAKER
RAP
Now, this music has got soul!
I could listen to Anita Baker all day.
But you don't understand rap. You must listen to the words
Don't you just love Anita Baker
No! Give me rap any day.
RRRRRRR

eccentricity and absent-mindedness of the headmaster contribute to the chaos and confusion which is an invariable part of the day to day running of the school, (and an essential source of humour in the comic). However, despite the strange teachers, the lack of facilities and textbooks, the students do get to learn, unlike their friends attending DET schools in Soweto.

Thandi, by way of contrast, wins a scholarship to attend a convent in the northern suburbs. By juxtaposing our characters' experiences in different kinds of schools we hope to encourage our readers to ask critical questions about the kind of education system that would be most appropriate to a future South Africa.

Once we had received the go-ahead from Sales House, we set about creating a pilot episode which would serve to introduce our main characters and some of their dynamics, as well as embody many of our ideas about popular literature. In conceiving the comic great emphasis was placed on the local setting. We wanted to foster a strong sense of place in order to counter lingering streaks of cultural chauvinism which dictate - especially when it comes to children's reading - that good stories always take place elsewhere, in Britain or America and that South Africa is somehow 'unstoried' or inferior story material. For the same reason we set out to create a top quality, full-colour comic which, in terms of artwork and story, would match any comic in Europe.

After commissioning a number of artists to produce roughs we eventually selected Carlos Carvalho, an artist who has been deeply influenced by the 'clear line' style of Herge, the Belgium creator of Tintin. The stylised 'naturalism' of Carlos's artwork allows us to explore a human and geographical landcape in some detail without cluttering the comic frames. Because our comics are aimed at readers with different cultural backgrounds who may not have encountered many comics before, we try to make the artwork as accessible and attractive as possible. In the first episode the two boys catch a train from Soweto to Johannesburg and walk through Joubert Park to reach their new home in Hillbrow. In order to enhance recognition of the backdrop and ensure authenticity we undertook the same journey ourselves, taking many photographs for reference.

The story itself was workshopped with members of the Storyteller Group and a young black playright called Nhlanhla Sicelo, who was a particularly useful source of the colloquial language spoken by the young boys, especially Veli. In subsequent episodes of '99 Sharp Street' we have followed the precedent set in the pilot episode of using Standard English in the text blocks, while the characters' speech reflects the cadences of English as it is spoken everyday in the townships. The use of expressions such as 'Heyta Ngwenya!' and its automatic rejoinder 'Sharp! Sharp!' validates - as only written language can - people's everyday experiences of English as a familiar language of communication, rather than a foreign language belonging to the classroom and far removed from their immediate lives. Besides making the comic more authentic and accessible, such expressions are doubtless a powerful way of attracting reluctant readers alienated by more formal written discourses.

Readers responses

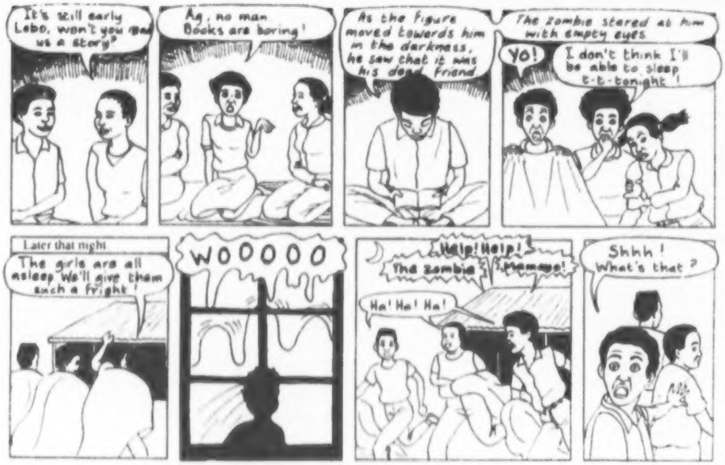
Serialising '99 Sharp Street' in a publication like CLUB has afforded us a unique opportunity to establish an ongoing (hopefully interactive) relationship with a popular audience unprecedented in South African publishing history. To date we have received hundreds of letters in response to the introductory episode. The letters written by teenagers (especially Std 9 and 10 students), parents and teachers confirm that: '*99 Sharp Street*' has undeniably struck a popular chord.

The response to the use of coloquial language, the minute detail in the pictures, and the humour in the story, has been overwhelmingly positive.

> I am a school boy and I like to read the story just like that. Even the way you put your pictures and the tsotsi taal that will be used, I am so very glad if this story will continue.

There is no antagonism to the medium . In fact, without exception our readers refer to the comic as a 'short story'.

Moreover, its educational potential has been widely perceived, both as a dynamic resource for


It's still early Lebo, won't you read us a story?
Ag, no man Books are boring!
As the figure moved towards him in the darkness, he saw that it was his dead friend
The zombie stared at him with empty eyes
YO!
I don't think I'll be able to sleep t-t-tonight!
Later that night
The girls are all asleep We'll give them such a fright!
WOOOOO
Help! Help!
The zombie
Mamma!
Ha! Ha! Ha!
Shhh! What's that?

consolidating English skills and as an accessible medium for exploring contemporary issues.

> The pictures they are interesting, even matric level I gain a lot of English and it gives me a picture of something that is happening nowadays.

The characters are perceived as being authentic. Many readers evince strong identification with the characters in the story.

> I am 19 years old. To me it seems as if I was Thandi Cele. The pictures make me feel like her.

Most importantly, the comic has established itself as a powerful medium to encourage reading. Time and time again, readers have written in saying this is the first short story they have ever read and that they have re-read the story many times. Every letter ends with a request for more.

Further research

As the story unfolds (we have recently completed episode 4) the Storyteller Group hopes to coordinate ongoing research into the use of comics in more formal teaching situations and contribute to studies in the field of visual literacy. Thousands of copies of the pilot episode have been distributed to educational groups, schools, libraries and resource centres, in rural and urban areas. Initial feedback (from adult literacy teachers, high school teachers and remedial English teachers) has been overwhelmingly positive.

At one high school the comic was used in a free composition excercise by Standard Seven students - many of whom have English as a second language - with exciting results. In some instances, students who usually battle to string together a few lines of coherent written English produced highly creative and complex comics and dialogues using the '99 Sharp Street' characters.

The comic has also worked well at different levels in adult literacy classes once the learners have become familiar with the left to right sequentiality, the speech bubbles and other comic conventions. Many learners, after reading the introductory text blocks with the guidance of their teacher, discover that they are able to read the short colloquial sentences in the speech bubbles without assistance - a real confidence booster. Moreover the narrative and the colourful details offer a rich context for discussion about a whole host of important issues, including education, growing up, urban experiences, the Group Areas Act and many more.

One million copies

In Europe many comics are serialised in popular magazines before taking on a life of their own in stand-alone comic books. In keeping with this approach, we have recently completed the artwork of our very first 32 page popular reading magazine which contains a 22 page stand-alone '99 Sharp Street' adventure. The story which was workshopped with students at Barnato Park reflects many issues pertinent to the lives of young people growing up in an urban environment today. In addition, we explore three broadly educational themes which have been very carefully written into the plot to facilitate further research:

The role that books can play in our lives once a reading habit is entrenched.
Characters in the '99 Sharp Street' story talk about books and use books to gain ideas and information; books are shown to be a source of pleasure; and a way of forging friendships.

The importance of taking care of our environment.
In the comic, the protagonists and their classmates go on a field trip to the UmNandi Valley River - a fictional re-creation of the Umgeni River area - only to discover that the river is severely polluted. The story ends with the schoolchildren joining forces with children in a nearby village to clean up the river. The episodes in Natal have been based on the actual experiences of teachers working in farm schools in the area and reflect current thinking in environmental education. In addition, the story contains useful practical information on river pollution and has been designed to form a dynamic supplement to Primary School biology and geography lessons.

The urgent need for the regeneration of grassroot structures.

After the children have formed an Action Group and cleaned up the river, they discover that there is also chemical pollution, emanating from a local factory. The adults decide to form their own Action Group to lobby the factory owner. In the end we learn that they have been successful and that this has inspired them to undertake further projects for the benefit of the community such as building a community library.

At the moment we are attempting to raise funds to publish a million copies for free distribution in support of the International Year of Literacy. Alternative distribution channels will be used to distribute 800,000 copies of the comic. The remaining 200,000 will be made freely available to educational groups throughout the country and will form part of a massive research project into the role which popular literature can play in meeting the diverse needs of second language readers and learners in South Africa.

It is hoped that the results of the research may catalyse an indigenous popular publishing industry as well as contribute to the development of dynamic and appropriate curricula in a future formal schooling system. ■

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MEDIA EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN
A Songololo Experence

Patric Solomons

The gross imbalance and lack of effective communication resources for children is a fact that should give us sleepless nights. What children see, hear and read during the most formative years of their lives has great consequences for their future and the future of the society in which they live. The responsibility of those who provide and control media for children is therefore enormous and of concern to us all. The misuse and exploitation of children by the media can easily be demonstrated through the child-tailored consumer industry creating 'needs' for food, clothes and toys through publications, radio and television. The development of an alternative, non-exploitative media for children in South African is not only a necessity, but a priority.

Molo Songololo, a community project based in Cape Town, is attempting to address the situation created by mainstream media, especially television. It rejects the idyllic representations of childhood (the cute children of commercials) and attempts to produce a context which children can recognize and identify with.

In contrast to these representations, the majority of children in South Africa actually grow up under-fed, in poor health, ill-clothed, poorly housed, under-educated and many are homeless on the streets. Children grow up in communities of endemic violence, crime and gangsterism, poverty, bad living conditions and high rates of unemployment. Everyday we see and hear how badly children are treated and abused. Children have very little protection against the deteriorating community and family life. It becomes increasingly difficult for children to escape the destabilising effects of apartheid policies that determines to what extent they grow up and participate in society. Children are not given the opportunity to express themselves and no importance or value is attributed to their ideas, feelings and experiences about those things that affect them directly or indirectly in their daily lives.

It is in this context, where the stultifying effects of apartheid education robs children of the opportunity to develop to their fullest, where the majority of children in South Africa suffer from a lack of suitable reading material, that Molo Songololo operates. As a children's magazine-based project Molo contributes in a small way, to the development of an alternative media for children in contrast to the exploitative mainstream media. In addition to the development of this alternative media form, the magazine develops a critical awareness and understanding of the media. Beyond this critical understanding, Molo encourages the active aspect of media education that Bob Ferguson advanced to in his opening address of this conference in which he advocated the need for action beyond the knowledge aspect of media education. Molo encourages the development of active communicators who respond to the context about them, which is essential for any democratic society. A description of Molo Songolo will elaborate on these initiatives to develop active communicators.

Molo Songololo, Xhosa for 'Hello Centipede' is a project for children between the ages 6-13 years. The feet of the songololo symbolise the thousands of children from all backgrounds who work together to cross racial and class barriers that exist. The project first started in 1979 with the children of Crossroads, a squatter area near Cape Town. Children were asked to write and draw about their personal histories and experiences in the township. The wealth of material collected clearly expressed children's ideas, feelings and experiences in the squatter community. Soon the idea to start a magazine for children took root.

In 1980, when Molo Songololo first 'crawled' into schools, libraries, children's groups and Sunday schools in and around Cape Town, we said to the children, 'Everyone has ideas, feelings and thoughts. You get ideas from books, people and everywhere. Your ideas are just as important as those in books. We would like you to write to Molo and tell us about your feelings thoughts and experiences. If you send your stories to Molo, then other children would be able to share your ideas and listen to you.' Through the magazine children are given the opportunity to share their ideas, feelings and experiences and gain insight into each others lives. This also serves to dispel the idea about media being the domain of professionals only. It also contradicts the usual notions of about what is newsworthy, in these ways beginning the task of demystifying the media.

At one point children were asked to write about 'the biggest problem in South Africa.' This attracted numerous responses, which included the following:

> The biggest problem is the shacks are leaking when it is raining and very hot when it is not.
>
> The biggest problem is mice and cracks and merds and guns and disease and snakes and sinking sand.
>
> The group areas, where people put your where they want to, a letter comes and say you must move. These hurt the people. My idea is that people must fight back.
>
> Please Molo, give me address of children who live in leaking shacks. I will ask my daddy to make them a house like ours that do not leak.

Molo's understanding of their audience has proved appropriate, as children respond favourably to the magazine, regularly sending in stories, drawings and poems. Many letters and phone calls are received from children sometimes just to say 'Hello Molo'. The material that children contribute constitutes an important part of the magazine. By valuing what children are saying and by communicating their ideas feelings and experiences, children recognise themselves as valuable contributors to the magazine that aims to:

- give children the opportunity to express themselves,
- give children the opportunity to learn and understand issues that affect their daily lives directly or indirectly,
- make relevant reading material available to children,
- promote community involvement amongst children,
- advocate good alternative values, such as non-racism, non-sexism and non-competitiveness amongst children, and

- create awareness around children and their rights.

To date, 33 000 copies of the magazine get printed once every six weeks. It gets distributed mainly in the Western Cape through schools and children's groups. The magazine, which is seen as a forum for discussion, response and communication between children, provides children with a varied content. Besides the letters, stories and drawings that children contribute, the magazine also features educational material, vocabulary building, language development, things to do, community news, book reviews, games, puzzles, and stories on health, safety, history, plants, animals, people and events. The development of a children's editorial group helps to monitor the appropriateness of the magazine in style and content. The editorial group is drawn from schools in different areas, reflecting the diversity of the readership, in order to maintain the relevance of the magazine.

In the early days Molo Songololo faced several teething problems. These included not having funds for office space and printing cost, as well as a lack of support on the part of teachers and principals who were afraid to touch the magazine. 'It is too political for children' was often the response. Many feared getting into trouble with their Education Departments. The Department of Education and Culture went so far as to instruct principals not to allow the magazine on school premises. The State of Emergency and the extensive media restrictions that were introduced severely hampered the work of the project. In 1985 the Publications Board banned an issue for distribution. Fortunately, the magazine was already out when we received the notice. These factors influenced the print-order drastically and denied hundreds of children access to the magazine.

The popularity of the magazine amongst children and the continuous efforts by the staff of Molo Songololo to promote the magazine amongst teachers and principals overcame these difficulties. At the moment the project has contracts with over 80 schools. Many teachers encourage children to get the magazine and use it as a resource in the classroom. Children do the projects in the magazine as part of their schoolwork and often classes submit these to Molo Songololo for publication. Both children and teachers look forward to receiving the educational pull-out in the magazine. This gets pasted up in classrooms, staffrooms and children's bedrooms.

Besides the production of the magazine, Molo Songololo also runs and facilitates children's workshops and teachers' workshops. The children's workshop programme give the project the opportunity to consult and involve children directly in the production of the magazine. Children are able to interact and share with others. Various issues get raised with children to get their ideas and feelings. This is done through art, drama, storytelling, creative writing, puppetry, dance and movement. Over the school holidays numerous requests are received for Molo Songololo to run and facilitate children's workshops. The project also encourages schools and community groups to run extra mural activities for children.

The teachers' workshop programmes faciliate the sharing of ideas on alternative teaching aids and on the creation of resource materials. The creation of personal resource materials by teachers is in itself one of the outcomes of Media

Education philosophy. The teachers' workshops also attempt to develop methodology and to stimulate both teachers and principals to take greater responsibility in the development of children. The project has already hosted two successful Primary School Teachers Conferences in the region and is seen as a facilitator around the development of Primary Education.

Molo Songololo is directly linked to the needs of children in various communities. As a production, its direction is largely determined by the happenings in communities and the responses of children. The project is also an advocate for children's rights and tries to involve as many people as possible in its work, especially children. Molo Songololo is a magazine based project for children, by children, and about children. We presently face the major task of undoing apartheid education in South Africa and building a new progressive education. One of Molo's primary functions is to promote literacy, a task that should be everyone's responsibility. It does this literacy work in a way that also develops an awareness of media and develops creative and active communicators. Molo Songololo recognise its limitations and hopes to strengthen its efforts for promoting *children's* voices to be heard. ■

Part VII

Afterthoughts

This part of the publication deals with and develops reflections and assessments of the field of Media Education.

These relate to the ideas presented in the conference specifically as in a theoretical paper by Urbasch, not presented at the conference, but written as a response to it. He confronts the problematic position of educators in their attempts to develop liberating and empowering pedagogic practices that demystify ideology. Urbasch is concerned with that very ideology which must also inhabit the notions and practices of the educators. Perhaps such issues can be confronted in future Media Education forums.

Finally, the appendices present three sets of ideas and declarations on Media Education. First, we have reproduced the historical *UNESCO Declaration on Media Education* of 1982 (in Appendix One). This is followed by the recent *Recommendations from the Toulouse colloquy on 'New Directions in Media Education'* which took place in Toulouse, France from 2 to 6 July 1990 (in Appendix Two). The latter addresses particular problems in the field of media education, problems and considerations that very largely mirror those we encountered during the conference..

Finally, the delegates of the conference expressed various ideas and concerns at the final plenary session of the conference. These are consolidated into Appendix Three, entitled *Resolutions and Conclusions of* *the First National Media Education Conference.*

Some Reflections on Hegemony and the Hegemony of Teaching

Michael Urbasch

In the introductory remarks to the Developing Media Education Conference (contained in the programme) the organizers state the following:

> As a relatively recent field of study, Media Education is in the position to make a positive contribution to progressive education within South Africa.

This paper does not attempt to refute this hope, rather its intention is to facilitate progressive media based teaching by way of a critique, which aims to draw attention to a number of conceptual issues, which I believe to be in need of urgent clarification. The issues to which I refer represent a number of tendencies which seemed to be symptomatic of not only the Media Education conference, but also of much contemporary progressive (counter hegemonic) intellectual theory and practice. This might be vaguely articulated as the unwillingness of academics to openly engage in the contradictions implicit in intellectual practice. (When I use the term Intellectual I am self conscious of the multifarious uses to which the term can be put. Intellectual as I wish to use it refers to those who fall under the broad term of humanist intellectual; not humanist in the sense of liberal or philosophic humanist, but humanist in the sense that they actively produce and teach methodologies of creative understandings within specific sites normally thought of as educational.)

The polemical core of what I have to offer is rooted in Foucault's exploration of the different modes by which human beings are made into subjects. In this light, the connection between knowledge and power becomes moot to any exploration of academic discourse and practice. For Foucault the production of Knowledge implies more than the disinterested pursuit of truth.

In *Discipline and Punish* Foucault (1977) bears testimony to the historical development of what he calls a 'new economy'of power. This power grew out of the demise of Feudalism and the development of the new national states in the late Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries. The change from Feudalism to more modern forms of government necessitated a change in the way that power relations are organized. Under Feudalism there existed a complex series of obligations between subject and sovereign. This normally meant that the sovereign was in possession of powers sanctioned by right while the subjects had the legal obligation to obey. Power was exercised in a naked and brutal manner; the emphasis being on public displays of force which acted to make palpable the sovereign's power and will. However, the problem was that while such displays of force were salutary they were also wasteful. The contradiction being, that while they did often act to cower the population, they also provided arenas for public display of discontent and resistance.

The development of the state from its feudal to modern form, necessitated the development of new, and ostensibly less violent, forms of government. There thus developed what Foucault calls 'an art of government' (Foucault, 1979) based on a new conception of power; one that was not predicated on feudal notions of right. Under this form power operates through the pacification of the subject, through consent. This power Foucault designates bio-power or disciplinary power.

The emergence of the new human sciences, such as Sociology, Psychology, and the new turns evident in Philosophy, were the enabling conditions that laid the basis for these new modalities of power. For the first time we see the emergence of 'Man' (read here the individual) as a quantifiable subject. As an object of knowledge, Foucault argues that these disciplines were evidence not so much of a disinterested field of intellectual endeavour, but were rather evidence of innovative modes of social control. These disciplines develop methodologies and practices, the aim of which is the creation of docile subjectivities through a process, which simultaneously acts to individuate and bind the subject in a totalizing vision. The significance for us derives out of Foucault's insistence that these modalities of power take place at institutionalized sites using experts as their method of propagation. Foucault's models are the Asylum, the Hospital, the Factory, the School and the University. Foucault comes bearing bad news: the transfer, production and reproduction of knowledge (read here the mediation and production of meaning) is always intimately involved in the production of power relations:

> Perhaps we should abandon the belief that power makes mad and that, by the same token, the renunciation of power is one of the conditions of knowledge. We should admit rather that power produces knowledge......that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. (Foucault 1977, pp. 27-28)

However, before we can say anything more about the above, it will be necessary to say a few things about the state of contemporary intellectual and theoretical practice, and to investigate how this might relate to Media Education.

The 1960s and 1970s saw the development of a number of (radical) theoretical approaches which challenged the hegemony of the traditional methodologies. These contemporary approaches collapsed traditional notions of the aesthetic, the literary, the artistic, the cultural. The traditional boundaries which up till then had separated economics, politics and aesthetics were rent asunder. Traditional empiricist methodologies, along with their attendant practices and ideologies, were rightly criticized as being intimately involved in the reproduction of social and economic structures, which were the basis for social repression. Academics embarked upon a rewriting of cultural history which would expose (amongst others) the gender and class based nature of traditional social hierarchies.

The great and revisionary outpourings which flowed from the pens of Marxist, feminist, psychoanalytic and deconstructionist scholars were no longer informed by a naive search for knowledge, but had intentions which were revolutionary or emancipatory as their basis. However, this is not to suggest that their task was in any way unified. Marxist, feminist and deconstructionist scholars had projects which were often unrelated, if not in direct opposition. For instance Marxists allied their practice to the emancipation and struggles of the working class. To do this the Marxist adopted a materialist position, a position that took the real conditions of men and women as the basis for their critical engagement. The 'real' in this case was relatively unproblematic, at least until the structuralist re-reading of Marx, initiated by Althusser. The Althusserian revolution led the way to a Marxist concern with ideology as the 'imaginary'. This preoccupation opened the way to the emergence of all kinds of conceptual horrors. Meaning was placed firmly back on the Marxist agenda, and Marxists had once again to take part in philosophy rather than get on with the historical task of social transformation.

The problems posed by a structuralist Marxism were greatly vexed by the rise of postmodern and poststructuralist theorizing. The 'precocious dilettantism' of these scholars enjoined debates which existed around textuality and language. Criticism consisted in reading the text for its silences and conflicts. The epistemic break wrought by poststructuralists placed questions about meaning, representation and reference onto the centre stage of critical inquiry. For the most part deconstructionist scholars denied the possibility of reference. The intellectual was left only the outward manifestation of signs rather than their material reality. However, if reference was contradictory, then the world was unknowable and knowledge was impossible. Unless of course knowledge was to be found in a sublime recapitulation of the same self-evident (truth).

The debates enjoined by postructuralist and materialist intellectuals found positive application within feminist and cultural theorizing. For the first time feminists developed theorizing which seemed adequate to the task of explaining the connection between representation and gender formation. Feminists addressed such subjects through a diverse understanding of the relationship (amongst others) between ideology, subject formation (interpolation), desire, power, patriarchy and oppression. Inherent in this was a concern with the differing modalities of representation. Cultural scholars developed methodologies to explain the modes by which cultural meanings and representations were mediated and struggled over, studying the ways in which values and groups are either affirmed or marginalized.

Media educators, like other progressive educators and academics, become aware of the distinction that Kenneth Burke and later Frank Lentricchia (1983) were to draw our attention to. Namely the distinction between education as a function of society, and society as a function of education. To be in the first camp is to be a conservative. You believe that the task of education is to 'make normal', of ensuring that the pedagogical subject will be trained (taken through the human equivalent of the process of dressage) so that they will be happy, useful, productive, and safe subjects, in the social and political sense of the term (Lentricchia 1983). To be in the second camp is to be a radical. You believe that things are fundamentally wrong and the educator's task is to put them right. The desire, then, of progressive educators is the development of a counter 'hegemonic culture' through the provision of what Robinson & Mentor (1991) (following Aronowitz Giroux) call a 'language of possibility'. In other words a language capable of pointing the way 'to the conditions necessary for new forms of culture, alternative social practices, new modes of communication, and a practical vision for the future' (Robinson et al. 1991), a knowledge which would imply a practical empowerment. As Eve Bertelsen (1991) puts it, the aim of such an education would be the development of critical approaches which would allow students to ask such questions as:

> Whose frames are supplying the meaning of these events? Whose interests are being naturalized in this particular case? Whether the meanings/interests are those of the so called ruling-class or those of the workers.

Progressive educators dream the dream of an educational process rooted in the needs of the oppressed majority an educational process that would avoid the practices of the older authoritarian (imperialist) methodologies, with a commitment to empowerment, through the confirmation of popular struggle and perceptions; one that as Sutherland (1991) suggests, will allow students to become not simply consumers, but producers. Indeed, a true peoples education:

> Peoples Education, with its emphasis on linking educational change to political change and democratizing classrooms and schools, embodies a most dynamic form of critical pedagogy, rooted as it is in the realities of a whole society undergoing transformation. (Robinson et al.,1991)

What is at stake is quite simply power! Again, Robinson and Mentor (1991) quote Aronowitz and Giroux:

> power is both a negative and positive force...[it] is at the root of all forms of behaviour in which people say no, struggle, resist, use oppositional discourse, and fight for a different vision of the future...The notion of power that underscores this positive view of social control takes as its starting point the empowerment of teachers and the confirmation of their histories and possibilities. (Aronowitz and Giroux 1987)

Now it is not my intention to deny the above, but rather (following Foucault) to amend it: power is at the root of all forms of behaviour in which people say yes! Power is to be found in the construction of subjectivities appropriate to a particular vision of the world. In other words power always makes normal. And education is intimately involved with this process! Looked at this way, power becomes problematic. Of course Robinson and Mentor might argue (if they were inclined to take issue with such a petit bourgeois notion) that they avoid the implications of such a charge, because the vision which informs their practice is non hierarchical and democratic. Theirs is a practice designed to serve the needs of a future South Africa. However, the question of who decides such needs is moot. Presumably the progressive educator argues that such questions be decided through consensus, rather than by imposition. This is where education can play a role. In democratic practice, the teacher is seen as a facilitator, rather than demigod-expert. As Sutherland (1991) argues:

> Media teachers need to accept that in teaching media they do not need to control the learning environment as an expert, but rather enter into it as learner, alongside the pupils. They become a facilitator of the learning process...

Now this, might to the aware, seem like the return of an old wolf in a new lamb's skin; in other words such a project seems suspiciously Leavisite. The Leavisite impulse was also initially a democratic (counter hegemonic) one. Leavis imagined a pedagogy in which the student is led by a process of discussion and debate to realize a consensus; a consensus not based on a set of pre-existing set of values, but rather through the creation of them (Bell, 1988). The goal was the creation of an organic national culture! Now discussions of where Leavis erred are not appropriate here. I make the point simply to draw a number of connections. For it is also the dream of the progressive intellectual to create a culture of consensus, which is appropriate to the needs of the majority and to the needs of the time. However, (taking into account what we have already discussed) the progressive educator refutes charges of elitism by arguing that a progressive project is saved by its commitment to a theoretical and material practice allied to the task of liberation. Our task we are told is not to make 'evaluative judgments about (its) cultural and moral quality' (Sutherland, 1991) nor adopt what Bob Ferguson (1991b) calls a 'transmission model' of teaching, which implies 'that if you tell a student what is right they will believe it.' Rather our task is a facilitatory one, but not in the sense that it misunderstands itself, propagating some crude empiricism, but rather as Bob Ferguson (1991a) argues, through a commitment to critical theorizing.

> (Theory)... is a practical necessity if Media Education is to fulfill its potential as a subject which engages in open and free critical enquiry, and which seeks practical applications for all its findings.

It is thus around theorizing that much of the arguments for progressive practice rally. Media educators are called upon to place themselves at the interface of a number of theoretical traditions: reading representations as texts, interrogating the text for its silences, its absences, working out the relationship between the text as message and the text as product. Media educationalists thus work on the borders of textual and material practice: they deal both in representation and structural formation, they deal both in ideology and desire, they examine both the 'popular' and the canonical, they study both the affirmed and the marginalized.

At its best, theory disturbs the power of the 'referent to speak all on its own' (Shaffer, 1981). We become aware of the ideological lurking in the normal. It is theory that tells us amongst other things, that 'culture does do work' (Lentricchia, 1991). Thus we discover, that 'femininity' and 'masculinity' are not secure ontological categories, but rather evasive signifiers, which do enormous amounts of cultural, social, economic and political work. However, certain theoretical traditions can also do damage to the emancipatory impulse of progressive practice. For it is also theory that tells us that theory itself does not simply reflect the real, the truth: that theories are representation machines, that theories organize and model our world in ways complementary to their own structure, that theories imply representations and that representations disguise intentions, that the repressed in representation is nearly always power.

Now it is here that the cracks in progressive practice start to appear. Eve Bertelsen, if we remember, asks... 'whose frames of references do meanings serve?' (Bertlesen, 1991) The (unhappy) contention of my argument is, that theories and their commensurate representational modalities, often serve the needs of the intellectual class which creates them in the first place; that theories, in effect, issue from particular sites, and are more often reflections of the perceptions and struggles of the intellectual class than the popular. As Foucault (1980) argues:

> Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is the types of discourses which it eccepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true.

If Foucault is right, then intellectuals are part of the vast social machinery which transmits and regulates the production and transference of cultural and economic capital. We (whether we like it or not) are legitimation machines. We place ourselves in a particular relation to knowledge. Ours is a naturally evaluative process.

Kant, the 'Father' of the Enlightenment, wrote that:

> Enlightenment is man's release from his self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is man's inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another. (1987)

Kant's exhortation 'sapere aude' (dare to know) became the motto of Enlightenment thinking. Universal reason was that which would expose the myths and prejudices that hinder the progress of the human race. Progressive intellectuals find themselves in the uncomfortable position of endorsing Enlightenment thinking, while simultaneously, exposing the mythological and ideological coordinates of pure universal reason. If knowledge is a kind of discourse, if theory denies the academic access to a realm of objectivity and truth, if there is no Kantian sphere of pure reason, how does one justify one's knowledge claims? How does one protect against the charge of contingency?

The essence of the attempt by intellectuals to handle problems of contingency and relativism is implicit in what has already been said. Intellectuals substitute what we might call a 'strong' notion of reason for a 'weaker' version. By this I mean that intellectuals attempt, either implicitly or explicitly, to shift the burden of knowledge from the a-priori back to the theoretical. However, the theoretical is now seen as colonized by the needs of practical and popular engagement. The theoretical is seen as a site of struggle reflecting, and in the service of the organic needs of the majority. This allows the intellectual to carry on as if nothing has changed, or at least it provides a continuing and ongoing justification for our teaching and practice.

This model of theoretical knowledge borrows from the physical sciences, in that it assumes that the knowledge claims of a theory are testable and verifiable. Intellectuals can thus disclaim that this knowledge belongs to them, that they are its authors, or that it issues from their practice. Theory allows intellectuals to place themselves at a remove from any knowledge claim. More importantly, it allows the claim that the knowledge produced is liberatory, emancipatory, good (ie, applicable to all). Lyotard (1987) calls such theorizing metadiscursive.

> Metadiscourses attempt to legitimize their own status by providing some 'grand narrative' of understanding, such as the dialectics of spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth.

These projects are all ultimately related to the universal good, the betterment of the human race.

The seamless virtue of the metadiscursive, is disturbed by the realisation that intellectuals do not simply learn or transmit facts. Rather, intellectuals learn and transmit the complicated methodology and history which has shaped and determined the paradigmatic course of their discipline. This introduces Foucault's idea of discursive formations: where we understand disciplines as not so much attending to stable, essential objects (such as Literature, or Madness) but as a space, in which objects emerge and undergo transformation. Thus, it is the discursive rules of a discourse which establish the conditions for the existence of an object. It is then the paradigmatic orientation of the discipline which allows the intellectual to speak, which provides the very problematic in which objects and problems articulate themselves.

Taken seriously this view complicates the role of the intellectual, pointing to the multifarious problem of positionality, both in terms of class and in terms of being the possessor of recondite forms of knowledge - knowledge and categories of understandings which do not necessarily evolve out of a contemplation of the object, nor out of the struggles of popular practice, but rather, evolve out of the enabling conditions of the discourse itself.

Contemporary intellectuals exhort one another to refrain from imposing values and taste, from bludgeoning the student into submission before the holy cows of bourgeois culture. This project seems a positive one considering the realities of our South African situation. However, it is also a vexed one. Because while the intellectual rejects one kind of discourse he/she also selects others which just as insidiously 'determine, dominate, and even overwhelm the subject' (Lentricchia, 1980). Further (and this is the crux of the matter) it is the argument of this paper, that the problem does not resolve itself in the claim that our knowing is now purged of the prejudice of sexist, racist, Westo-centric, bourgeois culture; or that our reason is purged of its empiricist and individualist roots, nor that our knowledge is now in the service of the working class and that its roots are therefore organic and universal.

The act of deconstruction is always and necessarily an act of reconstruction. When we teach students to question or reject one set of representations, we, either implicitly, or explicitly, invite them to accept another. For after all the progressive intellectual must teach something! Our teaching must imply values, must imply cognitive maps of how the world works. The point is that those maps more often than not grow out of our own practice. They do not originate in the object itself nor in the student. Successful teaching is when the student is led to 'see' that a particular judgment is correct or appropriate: when the student has intuited enough of the theoretical rules to make the correct judgments for him/her self. This after all is the art of teaching. ■

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APPENDIX I
UNESCO Declaration on Media Education

This declaration was issued unanimously by the representatives of 19 nations at UNESCO's 1982 International Symposium on Media Education at Grunwald, Federal Republic of Germany. It is reproduced here since media teachers may well find it useful to quote or cite in preparing rationales, justifications or explanatory documents relating to media education.

We live in a world where media are omnipresent: an increasing number of people spend a great deal of time watching television, reading newspapers and magazines, playing records and listening to the radio. In some countries, for example, children already spend more time watching television that they do attending school.

Rather than condemn or endorse the undoubted power of the media, we need to accept their significant impact and penetration throughout the world as an established fact, and also appreciate their importance as an element of culture in today's world. The role of communication and media in the process of development should not be underestimated, nor the function of media as instruments for the citizen's active participation in society. Political and educational systems need to recognise their obligations to promote in their citizens a critical understanding of the phenomena of communication.

Regrettably most informal and non-formal educational systems do little to promote media education or education for communication. Too often the gap between the educational experience they offer and the real world in which people live is disturbingly wide. But if the arguments for media education as a preparation for responsible citizenship are formidable, now, in the very near future with the development of communication technology such as satellite broadcasting, two-way cable systems, television data systems, video cassette and disc materials, they ought to be irresistible, given the increasing degree of choice in media consumption resulting from these developments.

Responsible educators will not ignore these developments, but will work alongside their students in understanding them and making sense of such consequences as the rapid development of two-way communication and the ensuing individualisation and access to information.

This is not to underestimate the impact on cultural identity of the flow of information and ideas between cultures by the mass media.

The school and the family share the responsibility of preparing the young person for living in a world of powerful images, words and sounds. Children and adults need to be literate in all three of these symbolic systems, and this will require some reassessment of educational priorities.

Such a reassessment might well result in an integrated approach to the teaching of language and communication.

Media education will be most effective when parents, teachers, media personnel and decision-makers all acknowledge they have a role to play in developing greater critical awareness among listeners, viewers and readers. The greater integration of educational and communications systems would undoubtedly be an important step towards more effective education.

We therefore call upon the competent authorities to:

1. initiate and support comprehensive media education programmes - from pre-school to university level, and in adult education - the purpose of which is to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will encourage the growth of critical awareness and, consequently, of greater competence among the users of electronic and print media. Ideally, such programs should include the analysis of media products, the use of media as means of creative expression, and effective use of and participation in available media channels;

2. develop training courses for teachers and intermediaries both to increase their knowledge and understanding of the media and train them in appropriate teaching methods, which would take into account the already considerable but fragmented acquaintance with media already possessed by many students;

3. stimulate research and development activities for the benefit of media education, from such domains as psychology, sociology, and communication science;

4. support and strengthen the actions undertaken or envisaged by U.N.E.S.C.O. and which aim at encouraging international cooperation in media education. ■

Grunwald, Federal Republic of Germany, 22 January 1982.

APPENDIX II
Recommendations from the Toulouse Colloquy

The colloquy on 'New Directions in Media Education', organised by the British Film Institute (London) and the Centre le Laiison de l'Enseignement et des Moyens d'Information (Paris), took place in Toulouse, France, 2-6 July 1990. Participants were offered the chance to join one of three commissions, each of which was to address particular problems in the field of media education. The recommendations of each commission follow.

Commission I: How can the professional media participate in media education?

Media professionals and professional educators agree on the following shared aims: we recommend in the context of freedom of expression and the right to communicate that we should:

1. Promote the development of critical awareness.
2. Initiate projects which enable learning of the skill which will give access to the communication process and to mean of expression by creating centres of production and training centres in media education.
3. Promote the domcratisation of the media through increased access to the means of production and distribution.
4. Ensure that other institutions besides schools - e.g. parents' associations, viewers' associations, adult and community education - collaborate in media education.
5. Encourage and develop research on media and on media education through the collaboration of the partners.

Commission II: Strategies for media education in different countries

In making recommendations, members emphasised the following principles:
that all proposals should be set in the context of unanimous support for the principles of media education enunciated by the 1982 Grunwald Conference;

that all proposals stemmed from a recognition of the cultural and educational entitlement of students in every country to a basic measure of media education as defined by Grunwald.

Clearly, the channels through which recommendations should be made will vary from country to country. The following general guidelines were agreed:

that, whether nationally or internationally, recommendations should be made at the highest possible level;

that the process of recommendation should nevertheless embody a dual strategy, linking the lofty height of administration to the grassroots of teacher activity. Thus, for example, a recommendation appropriate to an international organisation like Unesco should also be brought to the attention of teacher support groups and a dialogue between them should be encouraged.

Recommendations were grouped under the broad headings of Training, Resources, Networks and Evaluation.

Training.

At both pre-service and in-service levels, there should be training of two kinds:

- for all teachers: a basic competency, related at the secondary and tertiary levels to their specialist disciplines and at the primary level to their general pedagogic skills;
- for interested teachers: training in greater depth, enabling the teachers to handle more specialised courses.

Training should include both the concept and understandings involved in media study and the pedagogical skills required to teach effectively.

Academic courses at university level should be provided in those countries where they do not already exist; or alternatively, funds should be made available to enable students from developing countries to attend such courses in overseas centres of excellence.

A firm structure of organisational responsibility for training should be established in each country.

Resources.

Funds should be released to enable applied research (i.e. projects conducted at classroom level) in media studies.

Study materials should be developed which relate to the specific culture(s) of the country of development; but these should be made available for exchange with other countries.

Networking.

An international network of media educators should be set up and widely publicised.

Within each country, media teacher groups should be established, along the lines of ATOM (Australia) and AMES (Scotland), for exchange of ideas, mutual support, lobbying, etc.

Networks of media professionals, prepared to act in the service of media education, should be set up; or, where they already exist (as in France), should be given every encouragement.

Evaluation.

The aims and objectives of media education programmes should be clearly formulated, to enable the evaluation of the programmes by providers, teachers and students.

In the spirit of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the views of students should be taken fully into account at the planning, implementation and de-briefing stages of media education.

Commission III: Media education and developing countries

1. In developing countries, media education outside the formal educational system deserves particular attention. Educational activities of grassroots and non-governmental organisations are also especially important and the Commission wishes to stress those aspects of media education which enable individuals and groups to contribute actively to endogenous cultural development.

2. An international survey of the numerous creative activities in media education undertaken in developing countries and outside of the formal

education system should be conducted by Unesco in association with regional communication research centres.

3. To assist formal and non-formal media education, the Commission recommends that a flexible training kit in media education usable also as distance learning material should be developed by leading media education centres in collaboration with Unesco. The training package should be tested in all regions with substantial elements reflecting the specific needs in each region or sub-region subsequently included.

4. In collaboration with international organisations such as Unesco, participating schools and institutions should seek to develop a twinning programme allowing the exchange of media educators within and between developing and developed countries.

5. Resource centres in media education to service schools and universities should be created in the developing world, first at the regional and subsequently at the national level. The centres should include a video and audio collection and basic production equipment for both print and electronic media.

6. The exchange of training materials and research in media education should be reinforced in the context of the International Association of Mass Communication Researchers (IAMCR) and COMNET (International Network of Documentation Centres on Communication Research and Policies). ■

APPENDIX III
Developing Media Education in the1990s

National Conference on Media Education 11 - 13 September 1990

The following document was prepared by a committee appointed at the final plenary session of the first national conference on Media Education in S Africa entitled "Developing Media Education in the 1990s." The committee drew up this document from the resolutions and views expressed in the final plenary session of the conference and were requested to disseminate it to diverse formal and non-formal educational bodies.

Resolutions & Conclusions of the First National Media Education Conference

The Conference

Two hundred and seventy educational planners, lecturers, teachers and media workers from both the non-formal and formal education sectors attended this conference which took place from 11 to 13 September 1990. The conference, entitled "Developing Media Education in the 1990s" was held at the University of Natal, Durban and was organized by the Media Resource Centre of that university in consultation with a planning committee made up of members from education, labour and service organizations.

The Field of Study

Media Education - which aims to broaden the study of culture from a narrow examination of traditional literature to considering contemporary culture and media at a popular level as well - is a recent development in S African education and the conference aimed to bring together those initiatives from throughout the country which, while valuable, are fragmented and isolated. The organizers believe that Media Education, free from those traditions of other disciplines which may have become stagnant or inappropriate, has the potential to make a positive and crucial contribution to progressive education in a new S Africa.

Delegates believed that the bulk of media, and in particular S African media, presently reflects race, gender and class prejudices which reinforce the authoritarian and discriminatory nature of S African society and education. Media education, on the other hand, has the potential to contribute to a democratic and equitable future for all citizens by nurturing a critical understanding of the media which would allow readers to be conscious of these prejudices and stereotypes. However, the role of Media Education goes beyond a deconstructive role to include, among other things, the potential to enrich other subjects and languages in particular as well as to provide an important integrative vehicle between subjects across the curriculum.

Implementation of Media Education

The conference called for the establishment of working committees comprising educationists from both the formal and non-formal education sectors to work towards the introduction of Media Education into primary, secondary and tertiary education curricula. In order that Media Education be firmly established in S Africa, the conference felt that political and educational leaders needed to be alerted to the implications and potential of Media Education and therefore provide funding for both training and development of programmes within non-formal and formal education and community initiatives.

Media Education should be implemented in three ways: firstly within language studies syllabi, secondly as a subject in its own right and finally across the curriculum. Delegates warned against approaches to media education - already evident in aspects of Media Education as practised in some departments of education in S Africa - that relegate it to the position of poor cousin of studies of language and literature. Such approaches result in a misplaced emphasis on those areas ordinarily dealt with in literary studies rather than those other elements that are peculiar to popular media forms. At the same time, it should also not be reduced to the acquisition of mere technical production skills.

Media Education, instead, needs to make learners aware of the wider context in which media is produced: learners need to understand the meaning of the messages, ownership patterns, production processes and how these relate to and reinforce political and social relationships in societies. In other words, the study of media should be designed to empower learners by making them critically aware of media both as it relates to school subjects and media in its broadest context.

As such, Media Education should not be confined to those media forms generally associated with high technology and sophisticated electronic media such as film and television, but that educators should use those very media resources readily available to them to engender critical discussion. This discussion should be linked to the reality of South Africa.

The conference made it clear that any Media Education curriculum should involve teachers in its construction. In addition, teacher organizations should immediately begin working on developing relevant programmes to be used by teachers in Media Education.

Copyright Issues

Finally, delegates repeatedly spoke of the present copyright laws being a stumbling block in their efforts to teach media. Those recent advances made in other countries regarding the changes of copyright laws where it pertains to education, need to be examined. The conference resolved to call for an urgent review of the present laws as they relate to education. ■

The essays assembled here were presented at a national conference on Media Education entitled "Developing Media Education in the 1990s", organized by the Media Resource Centre at the University of Natal in Durban.

As a relatively recent field of study, Media Education is in a position to make a positive contribution to progressive education within South Africa. It has the advantages of the absence of stagnant traditions, but at the same time has a crucial need to both assess and consolidate the diverse and valuable initiatives of teachers and educational authorities.

The keynote chapter by Bob Ferguson presents a comprehensive rationale for Media Education. Central to an understanding of the objectives is the issue that Media Education and styles of teaching/learning are importantly linked. Media Education is outlined as a complex area with interlinking aspects and concepts. Of these, Ferguson stresses the issues of theory, of power and of pleasure.

These considerations of pedagogy, theory, power and pleasure are picked up by the contributions that follow, which address the diverse approaches and developments.

This book will hopefully promote both critical and co-operative exchange among educators in the field of Media Education. The development of this field of Media Education will in turn contribute to the development of students who are both critical and active and accordingly essential for a democratic future.

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